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President: Mr. Kavan ..... (Czech Republic)

The meeting was called to order at 9.10 a.m.

Item 41 of the provisional agenda

Final review and appraisal of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s: High-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly to consider how to support the New Partnership for Africa's Development

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/57/156, A/57/175)

Draft resolution (A/57/L.2/Rev.1)

The President: The General Assembly will begin, pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 56/218 of 21 December 2001 and 56/511 of 15 August 2002, its high-level plenary meeting to consider how to support the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

I am pleased to be able to take this opportunity to make a statement at this high-level plenary meeting.

This year, we will be conducting the final review and appraisal of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). The New Agenda for the Development of Africa has played a very positive role in focusing the attention of the international community on various aspects of development in Africa. During the past decade, much has been accomplished and many difficult issues have been addressed, including those relating to poverty eradication, sustainable development and fighting the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Many lessons have been learned from 10 years of implementation of UN-NADAF. It has been reconfirmed that, first, conflict and development are mortal enemies; secondly, that accelerated development cooperation with Africa requires a new orientation, especially in conducting multilateral and bilateral programmes; thirdly, that commitments made by the parties involved need to be honoured; fourthly, that there is a need for sustained advocacy for African development; and lastly, and perhaps most important, that the results of the interim evaluations carried out during the implementation of UN-NADAF highlighted the need for coordination and collaboration among United Nations agencies in their development activities in Africa.

Although a number of corrective measures and steps were undertaken during the implementation of the New Agenda, not all the issues on its agenda were resolved. Africa remains a continent suffering from widespread problems, such as extensive poverty, HIV/AIDS, inadequate access to education, deficiencies in water distribution and insufficient sanitation. In addition to those pre-existing problems, new challenges posed by globalization continue to emerge.

With the NEPAD initiative, a new approach has been set in motion. For the first time, development needs and objectives have been identified and defined

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by African countries themselves. The NEPAD initiative, incorporating a complex matrix of key social, economic and political priorities, is a collective pledge by the leaders of Africa. It is based on a common vision and a firm and shared belief that they have a duty to address the development challenges facing their individual countries and the continent as a whole.

The discussion, concurrently, of UN-NADAF and NEPAD during the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly gives us a unique opportunity to learn from the lessons of UN-NADAF and to outline the conditions required for the success of the new initiative.

Today, during this high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on the New Partnership for Africa's Development, we will hear from representatives of Member States, who will express their views on how the international community, including the United Nations, can participate in the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

During informal panel discussions in the afternoon, panellists from the countries that initiated NEPAD will relate their first-hand experiences and set out their views on the potential for cooperation between the African countries and the United Nations.

I hope that members have a fruitful discussion, and I wish them success in their deliberations.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan.

The Secretary-General: I am delighted to join the Assembly for this important meeting dedicated to exploring ways in which the international community can support the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), so as to bring the maximum benefit to the people of Africa.

This partnership is first and foremost a partnership between African leaders and their peoples, and among States within Africa. In addition, NEPAD envisages a new partnership between Africa and the international community — especially the highly industrialized countries — based on mutual respect and interdependence as well as on transparency and accountability, including peer review and performance monitoring among both African countries and international partners.

NEPAD has adopted the millennium development goals as the centrepiece of Africa's development agenda. I warmly welcome that decision, because I believe there is a symbiotic relationship between NEPAD and the millennium development goals. NEPAD will not be a success if Africa fails to achieve the millennium development goals — and the world as a whole cannot achieve the millennium development goals unless they are achieved in Africa.

Two separate, but related, priorities — combating HIV/AIDS and promoting girls' education — are particularly central to achieving the millennium development goals and to realizing the promise that NEPAD holds for all of Africa. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has now become the greatest threat to Africa's development. It is a threat not just to people's health, but also, in many African countries, to the national security and very survival of those countries. HIV/AIDS has reversed the major gains in child survival and socio-economic progress achieved during the past two to three decades. It has exacerbated the problems of poverty, discrimination, malnutrition and sexual exploitation of girls and women. It is devastating the education system, as teachers are dying or becoming disabled more quickly than they can be replaced.

Conversely, the social benefits of girls' education include increased family incomes, delayed marriage, reduced fertility, lower infant and maternal mortality, better-nourished and healthier children, greater opportunities and life chances for women, and greater participation by women in political, social and economic decision-making.

Besides being key millennium development goals in their own right, the promotion of girls' education and the control of HIV/AIDS would be the most powerful enablers for the achievement of all the other millennium development goals in Africa.

By framing its aims around the millennium development goals, NEPAD challenges Africa's development partners to deepen their commitment to global poverty reduction. NEPAD's stated objective is to achieve the overall 7-per-cent annual growth necessary for Africa to meet one of the millennium development goals: halving poverty by 2015. Meeting that target requires more than doubling Africa's recent growth rates.

What now remains is for the principles of NEPAD to be converted into action, so that NEPAD makes a real difference for ordinary people in Africa. The implementation of NEPAD can benefit from two of the lessons learned by the United Nations and others involved in Africa's development over the past decade.

First, peace and security are vital to development. Economic programmes and projects devised by the New Partnership must be combined with real progress towards ending conflicts and deepening the roots of peace.

Secondly, development cooperation requires a new orientation. Through NEPAD, African leaders have shown that they consider political and economic reforms to be essential if lasting development is to be achieved. They have stressed human rights, fundamental freedoms and democracy. They have reaffirmed the importance of government with the consent and the authority of the governed. Increasingly, African leadership has itself spoken out against corruption and bad governance, and there is a growing emphasis on ensuring accountability and transparency. The international community must strengthen its support for this effort. That is what the partnership should mean.

Africa's future will be determined by Africans. To build this future, to end conflicts, to cure the diseases and to alleviate the multiple hardships that have held it back, Africa will need all the wisdom, political will and creativity it can muster.

It will also need the support of the developed world in an effort that is grounded in a sober and realistic assessment of what needs to be done. In this age of globalization, even the richest and the most powerful countries ignore the challenges and crises of other parts of the world at their own peril. At the same time, opportunities for growth and innovation exist everywhere — and all of us can benefit from one another's success. Let us make NEPAD a shining example of this global truth.

The President: Before giving the floor to the first speaker in the debate, I should like to remind members that, in accordance with resolution 56/511, there will be two plenary meetings today: this morning's plenary meeting, until 1 p.m., and a plenary meeting that will start at 3 p.m. and last until 7 p.m., as well as a separate informal panel, to be held from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

As decided by the General Assembly, the theme of the informal panel is "The international community's partnership with the New Partnership for Africa's Development". The President of Nigeria will orally present to the General Assembly a summary of the discussions in the informal panel at the end of the debate in plenary meeting.

I should like to inform members that, in a letter dated 14 September 2002 and addressed to me, the President of the Economic and Social Council requests to participate in the debate on the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

In the absence of any objection, may I take it that the General Assembly agrees to hear a statement by the President of the Economic and Social Council in the debate?

It was so decided.

The President: The President of the Economic and Social Council will be given the floor after all Member States wishing to speak in the debate on NEPAD have done so.

The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

President Obasanjo: This high-level meeting is taking place at a time when we, as African leaders, are seriously addressing the issues of poverty and underdevelopment in our continent. Essentially, we have launched the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), an all-embracing programme of African development.

NEPAD is a holistic and integrated development initiative for the sustainable development of Africa launched by the Organization of African Unity, now the African Union, at its summit in Lusaka in July 2001. Since then, NEPAD has received widespread international support, including from the G8, the European Union and other developed partners. The initiative has the following goals: the restoration of peace and security in Africa, as well as the management and prevention of conflict; good governance; the eradication of widespread poverty and acute income disparity between the rich and the poor; the promotion of accelerated growth and sustainable development; and putting a halt to the marginalization of Africa.

We are aware that ownership begets responsibility. In this regard, we, as peoples and Governments in Africa, have resolved to take our destiny in our own hands by drawing critical lessons from our past development efforts and putting such lessons to effect in the NEPAD initiative. We are determined to succeed in our desire to make the twenty-first century the century of Africa.

The NEPAD partnership operates at different levels; at the global level, between Africa and the international community, including multilateral institutions, donor agencies and development partners. In this connection, we acknowledge the support of the G8 at its most recent Summit in Kananaskis, Canada. At that Summit, the members approved a total of 112 specific actions that will go some way towards addressing the issues that face Africa. They also pledged to assess progress in Africa at their next Summit in France in 2003.

At the regional level, NEPAD is involved in framework cooperation between African States and regional institutions in joint ventures that will accelerate the process of integration. At the subregional level, NEPAD is utilizing the regional economic communities as building blocks for growth and economic development, all with the objective of fostering continental integration. And, at the national level, there is a growing partnership between the public and the non-governmental sector, such as the private sector, the informal sector and civil society, particularly the non-governmental organizations, aimed at revitalizing public/private sector partnership, as well as a meaningful and dynamic relationship with civil society organizations. We also call on African civil society to fully embrace NEPAD and to establish structures to promote its objectives.

In order to achieve the laudable objectives of NEPAD, a plan of action was recently adopted at the inaugural Summit of the African Union in Durban, South Africa. The first phase of the action plan focuses on specific actions and programmes based on a three-pronged strategy. First, it seeks to establish conditions for sustainable development so as to enhance and strengthen effective States and regional cooperation in order to enhance Africa's competitiveness. Secondly, it identifies and itemizes actions on priority sectors that could speed up the integration of Africa. Thirdly, it identifies the means of mobilizing resources from within and outside the continent for the effective implementation of policies, programmes and projects.

I would like to emphasize here that the development of an African Peer Review Mechanism under NEPAD marks a revolutionary innovation in Africa. It is essentially a system of self-assessment based on standard and internationally accepted codes and best practices, which aims at increased accountability and transparency in our Governments. It is our decision as African leaders to be accountable to our peoples. We are not afraid to set very high standards for ourselves, as our people expect this of us.

I wish to acknowledge the noble efforts of the Secretary-General, who has worked tirelessly to mobilize support for NEPAD within the United Nations and the international community.

In our collective effort to reduce by half the population of Africans who are living below the poverty line by the year 2015, Africa needs about $64 billion annually to prosecute NEPAD programmes and projects. Africa cannot bridge this resource gap alone. It requires concerted action on the part of all of us gathered here today. One solution is to tackle the issue of external debt squarely. Africa is severely crippled by its external debt burden. Therefore, the issue of debt cancellation should be considered as part of the priority action which the continent rightly deserves. I urge members to join hands with us and use the NEPAD initiative to tackle the critical issues affecting Africa.

Nigeria welcomes the recommendation, contained in the report of the Panel of Eminent Personalities on the review and final appraisal of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, that the United Nations adopt NEPAD as the successor policy framework for Africa's development. This will complement the efforts of African leaders at the national and subregional levels. In addition, we expect an office under the Secretary-General to coordinate the actions of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Population Fund, the World Food Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme for NEPAD, while a United Nations system-wide concerted effort should allocate senior officials from each to NEPAD. We sincerely believe that Africa deserves this support and trust that the United Nations and the international community

will urgently adopt measures that will add value to these efforts.

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Thabo Mbeki, President of the Republic of South Africa.

President Mbeki: I am pleased to join the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the Heads of State Implementation Committee of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), President Olusegun Obasanjo, in commending the New Partnership to the General Assembly.

At its inaugural meeting two months ago, the African Union confirmed the decision of the 2001 meeting of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) that the New Partnership for Africa's Development constitutes its programme for the socio-economic regeneration of Africa.

Accordingly, the African Union hopes that the United Nations will support the peoples of Africa as we engage in a historic struggle for the eradication of poverty and underdevelopment on our continent. In that context, I would like to express Africa's appreciation of the adoption by the General Assembly, a decade ago, of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF).

The New Partnership is designed radically to change the paradigm that has driven international programmes for African development. To indicate that change, we reaffirm that we, the Africans, are the architects of the NEPAD renewal plan. As Africans, we now own Africa's development agenda.

Secondly, we are determined to move forward on the basis of a partnership among the peoples of Africa, for the victory of the African renaissance. We are resolved to act together as Governments, as the masses we represent and as civil society.

Thirdly, we seek to ensure that we move away from the donor-recipient relationship with the developed world to a new partnership based on mutual respect, as well as shared responsibility and accountability.

Fourthly, we are committed to translate our words into a practical programme that actually changes the lives of the African masses, away from despair to a common future of hope and human dignity for all Africans.

The success that we must and will achieve in Africa will be a victory for all humanity, because the poverty of any people in any part of the globe is the poverty of all humanity.

In that context, all of us need to admit openly that what failed the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s was the absence of resources to translate its words into deeds. This is the challenge to which this Assembly and this Organization must respond, to affirm the commitment made in the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development less than two weeks ago that the representatives of the peoples of the world gathered here are not merely sounding brass and tinkling cymbals.

The objectives and action plans enunciated in NEPAD are consistent with a part of the targets contained in the millennium development goals, as well as those spelled out in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. It is, therefore, important that the current process of review, re-prioritization and realignment of UN-NADAF should take on board the objectives and programmes of NEPAD.

The United Nations and its agencies have a critical role to play in the implementation of the required programme of action. However, for the United Nations to fulfil this responsibility, it will need to give itself the institutional capacity to ensure that it responds to Africa's challenges in an effective, efficient and coordinated way. The United Nations will have to agree on an appropriate mechanism that will enable close monitoring of the implementation of its collective agreements in favour of African development.

Today, as Africans, we stand in front of the peoples of the world to make the pledge that we will honour the commitment we have made to ourselves and to the world that we will act firmly to extricate Africa from its long night of misery.

We value the readiness of the international community to enter into partnership with us, confident that together we will end the marginalization of our continent, ensuring that the sun truly shines over the peoples of Africa.

Let this be the message that issues from this high-level meeting of the General Assembly on NEPAD. From here, together, we must make the solemn statement that Africa's time has come.

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Abdelaziz Bouteflika, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

President Bouteflika (*spoke in French*): Let me first congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of this session of the General Assembly.

The present meeting, devoted to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), bears witness to the willingness of the international community and the United Nations system to be actively associated with Africa's development process. As members know, NEPAD is the project around which Africa has gathered so as to take an active part in the current changes, to integrate itself successfully into globalization and to secure the command of its own future.

This project is the result of a long process of maturation. It was conceived in the light of the experience of the decades following our independence, and it thus reflects Africa's determination to embark on a new development path, the goals and course of which will be set forth by the Africans themselves.

Africa was increasingly marginalized within the global economy because of the proliferation of conflicts, the spread and aggravation of poverty, and the HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis pandemics. Therefore, it became necessary to move off the beaten track and identify a new approach, with new premises, bases, objectives and new steps of implementation. Through this approach, African peoples are the masters of their development process. Peace, security, democracy, good governance and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are laid down as essential requirements for liberating peoples' creative powers and ensuring the full integration of women and young people.

Africa has chosen to reform its socio-political systems, through qualitative change in State structures, the redistribution of responsibilities, dedication to political and civil-society pluralism and the promotion of partnership between public powers and all the components of the society, because it has become clear to all that addressing the political dimension is a prerequisite to any viable development process.

The concept of economic development has also been reconsidered. It is regarded now as a multisectoral undertaking, bringing together the economic, social and ecological aspects. The private sector stands as the driving force of economic activity and is an essential vehicle for growth. Moreover, the development approach is part of a vision of regional and continental integration.

Africa is launching the necessary reforms in these fields in order to ensure interaction between sector-related policies at the domestic level and to reorganize the regional and continental economic space.

In addition, a new international partnership is required, based on the principles of mutual commitment and shared responsibility among all State and private bodies interested in such an undertaking. This partnership aims to achieve Africa's integration into the globalization process, which would help to improve the pace and stability of global economic growth.

Hence, what is at stake is to establish mutually beneficial common interests and to build new complementarities by broadening and diversifying economic relations and cooperation between Africa and its partners.

Moved by a global strategy, NEPAD has defined interdependent axes for action in priority areas for reviving African development.

The African Union has launched a process to rationalize its mechanisms for action aimed at restoring peace and security on the continent. It has decided to create a Council of Peace and Security and an African Academy for Peace.

That peace endeavour, in which several African heads of State have been personally involved, will have a positive impact on the continent's stability. It implies a political, financial, technical and logistical commitment from the international community and the United Nations system, in order to support and complete the efforts of Africans in that field.

Political and economic good governance is also at the core of the programme. Africa has achieved within the last few years undeniable progress towards that aim. An African mechanism for peer review has

already been set up. A declaration on democracy, political, economic and enterprise good governance has been drawn up on the basis of universally established norms. The declaration will serve as a frame of reference for assessment of the state of governance in Africa.

Human development, being the key of political, economic and social revival, is accorded priority attention in the NEPAD programme. Measures have been recommended to address Africa's tremendous education and health challenges, where considerable efforts are made to increase the resources allotted to human development and to reform the educational and health-care system.

In order to achieve the Millennium Declaration goals in terms of human development, further efforts are needed from Africa's partners, particularly with regard to combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

Agricultural and rural development, economic diversification and environmental protection are the other basic elements of NEPAD, for which African efforts need to be backed by international cooperation.

Financial mobilization and investment are essential to the success of NEPAD goals in terms of growth and poverty reduction. To that end, it will be necessary to improve the investment environment and to perfect the processes of banking, customs and fiscal restructuring and of creating and developing financial markets.

Africa's partners should contribute to the fulfilment of an integrated approach embracing trade, official development assistance and investment. Hence, lifting barriers in terms of access to world markets would definitely have a motivating effect on investors.

Improving official development assistance and its modalities is also necessary as a lever to boost investment.

Finally, creative financing mechanisms and appropriate guarantee schemes are vital for encouraging investments aimed at reducing Africa's deficits in infrastructure.

The dialogue begun a year ago with several official partners, as well as the private sector, the United Nations and civil society, has reaffirmed NEPAD's solid foundation. It has already come up with ideas, guidelines and initiatives to support its implementation. In that regard, the G-8 Action Plan for Africa constitutes a highly significant progress.

While NEPAD is in its implementation phase, I do not doubt that today's meeting will take advantage of this opportunity to open prospects for a genuine partnership between Africa and the world.

Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, has assured us of his full support since the inception of NEPAD. His commitment has helped mobilize the entire United Nations system and is part of his untiring action for international peace and security. I wish to express to him all our gratitude and respect.

It is now acknowledged that Africa's development is a global necessity. Africa, in cooperation with the international community, can change the course of its evolution. Other regions of the world that used to face similar problems have been able to adapt to the conditions of a world marked by the market economy and formidable progress in science and technology. Therefore, there is no reason why Africa cannot emerge from its isolation and underdevelopment.

The essence of NEPAD is to place Africa in a position to meet those challenges. The ambition of NEPAD is to ensure that democracy, economic revitalization and social progress take root in all African countries. The international community cannot overlook such a commitment because it is its duty to encourage and support it.

The President: I wish to thank the President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, who is also a former President of the General Assembly.

The Assembly will now have an address by His Excellency Mr. Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal.

Mr. Wade (Senegal): The world has its eyes fixed on America one year after the terrorist attacks against New York. On behalf of the Senegalese people and on my own behalf, I would like to express strong solidarity with the American people.

(*spoke in French*)

Today we again hear the clanking of weapons and the rumbling of aircraft, with the threat of confrontation between Baghdad, on the one hand, and

the United States and its allies, on the other hand, and we would like to express our viewpoint. I support all efforts for the United Nations to become involved, including France's proposal to give President Saddam Hussein a deadline to agree to receive and collaborate in good faith with United Nations inspectors.

I am pleased to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your successful election to the presidency of the fifty-seventh regular session of the General Assembly at one of the most crucial times in the history of mankind, and a singular moment for achieving the development objectives in the African continent. I am quite convinced that, with your tact and sense of moderation you will be able to put your outstanding qualities and qualifications to the service of the noble ideals of our world institution.

Naturally, I pay the same tribute to the Secretary-General for his exemplary and unfailing dedication to the lofty causes of our Organization. While repeating our heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Kofi Annan, I would like to tell him how greatly we appreciate his excellent initiative of convoking the representatives of the international community to urge them to support the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). In response to the alarming situation in Africa, the international community has generously responded to our urgent appeal.

Everyone has clearly understood that NEPAD is not just another plan but a new African vision for the future of our continent, a vision conceived by Africans themselves. The New Partnership for Africa's Development is a fusion of the Omega Plan, which I proposed, and the Millennium African Plan of President Mbeki of South Africa, President Obasanjo of Nigeria and President Bouteflika of Algeria; it has been generously supported by the G-8.

The base of NEPAD is three fundamental choices which constitute the parameters of long-term infrastructure: good governance, large-scale recourse to the private sector and the conception of the region as the operating space, rather than the States, which are too narrow to be optimal. The new plan is centred around eight sectors, or top priorities. They are the variables whose interplay should generate development: infrastructure, education, health, agriculture, energy, new information and communication technologies, the environment and access to developed country markets combined with diversification.

From the G-8 summit held in Genoa, Italy, in 2000 to the Kananaskis summit held in Canada last June, NEPAD's path has been marked with summit meetings between G-8 and African leaders and between experts on both sides. Thanks to both sides' understanding and frankness in the discussions, the international community is now convinced that something unusual is happening in Africa. It spares no praise for the African vision, the clarity of its design and the quality of its choices.

It is perhaps unnecessary to add that NEPAD is not a compendium of requests for aid but a long-term partnership in which the real winner will be the global economy, which will gain a partner able to participate fully in the dynamism of international trade, of whose total Africa currently represents only 1.78 per cent, and in the growth of the global economy, through the influx of massive investment instead of the 1 per cent it currently receives.

The unique purpose of this high-level meeting is to invite the international community to support NEPAD. With the world summits in Monterrey, Mexico, in March 2001, in Dakar, Senegal, with the private sector in April 2001, and in Johannesburg in July 2002, on sustainable development and its links to the environment, the cycle is completed; only action remains. In all sectors, regional projects have been duly identified. It only remains to decide by whom and how they will be financed — through the participation of Africans, public resources from our partners and the private sector.

A broad consensus has been reached on this point; it favours the private sector as the only sector capable of providing the immense resources that Africa requires. We will then be able to minimize the number of political meetings and preparatory events in favour of working meetings for the selection of priorities and their financing.

I would therefore like to include in my statement a message comprised of several points. First, I am convinced that the G-8 leaders and the private sector have deeply committed themselves to Africa, to help the continent enter the phase of sustainable development, above all through good governance, and also through heavy infrastructure investment and investment in the production of goods and services in

all sectors for domestic consumption and international trade, which — I would recall — is the motor of growth.

On the other hand, we must recognize that efforts towards good public and private governance are proliferating in Africa through the fight against corruption and illicit funds. In my region of West Africa, the outcome of legislative and presidential elections in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and the Gambia have not been disputed by opposition parties, which have generally accepted the results. That would have unthinkable a short time ago.

The peer review system has not yet been applied in its strict sense, but the heads of State of West Africa will review the situation of children in the subregion, with the assistance of eminent persons of the United Nations system. The expected high-level and important involvement demonstrates that adults attach as much importance to meetings on children as they do to summits among great leaders. We hope that the Secretary-General, despite his vast responsibilities at this crucial moment in history, will grace the event with his important presence, although his absence would be well understood.

Given the positive steps taken by our development partners, I hope that the pace of the use of credits will be accelerated; this is unfortunately often impeded by the lack of expert staff in our administrations, and by the variety of eligibility and disbursement procedures. The lack of experts, which in part explains the problems with use of credits in Senegal — and probably elsewhere, as well — could be compensated for either through the return of expatriate Africans, who constitute an important source of expertise in the developed countries, or by making consultants temporarily available to our States.

To my African compatriots, I will recall what has become obvious: humankind is at the heart of sustainable development in all its phases and throughout its duration. That is to say once more that the speed at which our continent will be developed is directly related to education and training. That means that raising education budgets in the area of 60 to 65 per cent — a figure still lower than those of the Asian tigers — would not be excessive. South-East Asia has shown that belt-tightening is worth the effort in order to create the authentic actors and promoters of development. On our web sites, expatriate African professionals will find all the information on NEPAD and can obtain answers to their questions.

The various social groups and civil society must not wait for the initiators of NEPAD to tell them their place in the widely-shared African vision of NEPAD. Individually and collectively, they must interpret NEPAD at their own level and apply it in the daily behaviour and activities.

I would tell the private sector that all the conditions are being met for it to invest in Africa, just as it has invested in Europe, the United States, Japan and now in the emerging countries of Asia and Latin America.

I will end where I began. Africa has, with a few exceptions, embarked upon the path of good governance. Without doubt, it is still taking its first steps, but it is important to accelerate the pace and not to go backwards. The general pace must reflect moderation. There will, no doubt, still be difficulties, but we must persevere with resolve and determination. We must above all implement the peer review mechanism courageously and without any complacency as it is the starting point of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. John Agyekum Kufuor, President of the Republic of Ghana.

President Kufuor: We have come here as a new generation of African leadership committed to the welfare of our people, and to seeing Africa restored to its place of dignity among the comity of nations. We have changed the nature of the debate on Africa's development in our own countries and in the international arena. No longer must our policies be simply responses to conditionalities imposed from the outside or to uncontrollable pressures generated internally. We are committed to good governance, to zero tolerance of corruption, to democratic freedoms and political tolerance, to inclusive policies and conflict prevention. The sound management of our economies and respect and support for the private sector are critical. That is because the private sector works best for creating wealth and attracting more sustained foreign direct investment. We seek to develop our continent in partnership with the rest of the world, in a spirit of dialogue and cooperation. This opportunity to reflect on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in the United Nations,

the embodiment of global cooperation for peace and development, is therefore timely. We recall that the Group of Eight industrialized countries (G-8) have already signalled, at their last summit, support for NEPAD. Prior to this, the international community, including the international financial institutions, had also expressed support for it.

We believe that this convergence of views on the importance of NEPAD to Africa's development augurs well for the people of Africa. Such an important shift of policy approach must, however, not remain a mere statement of support. It must be evidenced in practical, timely and concrete terms.

We, the African leaders, should commit ourselves to ensure that the Peer Review Mechanism works, and that no leader is allowed to hide under the umbrella of solidarity, or any other excuse when he or she fails to measure up to the principles underlying NEPAD. Our people deserve good leaders if they are to realize the dream of progress that inspired our struggle for independence.

The need to ensure balance in the enforcement of the principles of NEPAD is, perhaps, as important as ensuring good governance. We must take account of the fact that some African countries may have to go through a period of transition before they will be able to fully implement the principles of NEPAD. During this period of transition, care should be taken not to impose sanctions that might gravely destabilize entire communities, regions and neighbouring countries. To attain this balance, Africa and its partners need to collaborate better under the auspices of the United Nations.

It is also important that we focus at the global level, on a number of issues that are critical in creating the conditions for Africa's development.

Making Africa's local entrepreneurs a vital bedrock for expanded investments and thriving markets on the continent, requires not just the policy and regulatory environment that we as African Governments must provide, but it also requires access to substantial volumes of long-term concessionary credit and venture capital.

There is also the need to assure Africa levels of support that will enable the continent to provide social safety nets to sustain the minimum acceptable standards of health, education and nutrition for all, irrespective of social standing.

Thirdly, there are many other bottlenecks in the implementation of NEPAD. These include the crippling debt burden, declining levels of official development assistance, limited market access and the lack of trade and investment insurance. These bottlenecks must be addressed urgently.

The eyes of the people of Africa are on us today. For so long they have heard pledges and promises from their leaders and their development partners, and they have seen those promises broken.

We appeal to this Organization, and through it to the world, to seize this opportunity to work together with Africa to implement NEPAD, which is our framework for achieving the vision of the Millennium Declaration.

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo, the President of the Gabonese Republic.

President Bongo (*spoke in French*): In the contemporary world nothing that happens in one place goes without having an effect elsewhere. At a time of globalization, we must set sharing, partnership and solidarity as the watchwords for relations among the peoples of the world. They must organize the exchanges within the international community in all areas of human activity.

I am gratified by the welcome given to the African initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) by the international community, and particularly by the countries of the Group of 8. This welcome reflects heightened interest and new respect for Africa, which is the very essence of our initiative. We also owe it to the tremendous work accomplished by the Presidents of Algeria, Nigeria, Senegal, and South Africa, who have spoken so eloquently.

A new initiative and the fruit of collective awareness, NEPAD brings the full responsibility of leaders and the peoples of Africa to bear. This demonstrates even more that NEPAD transcends traditional concepts of aid to move towards the concept of active and dynamic partnership.

With NEPAD, Africa is giving the international community that wishes truly to participate in development, the ways and means to do so in a mutually beneficial partnership.

Time is of the essence. We must work together to achieve sustainable development. There are meetings that must not be missed and opportunities that must be seized at all costs. Personally, I am still going to wait and see. I am looking forward to seeing the international community and external financial stakeholders work together with us, *inshallah*, to set up NEPAD projects, particularly since these collective concrete projects will bring progress and well-being to the peoples of Africa.

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency the Right Honourable Jean Chrétien, the Prime Minister of Canada.

Mr. Chrétien (Canada): Thank you for your initiative in bringing the New Partnership for Africa's Development before this Assembly. NEPAD has been brought before the General Assembly because it has the potential to mark a global turning point, a turning point in the relationship among African States and in that of developed nations with Africa.

Mr. Grey-Johnson (Gambia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Above all, NEPAD has the potential to mark a turning point of hope for the people of Africa, one that could bring an end to generations of social and economic decline. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was created by Africans for Africans. It sets out unique African responses to deep-rooted and continent-wide challenges. But all Member States have a role to play in ensuring that the NEPAD vision becomes a reality.

Indeed, all Member States can draw inspiration from that vision: from its recognition that peace, security, democracy, good governance, human rights, and sound economic management are conditions for sustainable development; from its identification of the promotion of the role of women as one of two principal long-term objectives; from its frank acknowledgement that the spread of diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, stands to undermine the gains being made in human development; and, from the personal and specific commitment of progressive African leaders to hold each other accountable for delivering on the NEPAD vision of hope.

Canada looks upon this debate as instrumental to making NEPAD a centrepiece of the United Nations agenda and we are committed to doing our part.

(*spoke in French*)

Last June it was my great privilege to chair the Group of 8 (G-8) Summit, where Africa and NEPAD were the centrepiece of our agenda. Indeed, we were joined by several of the visionary African leaders who created NEPAD and who are with us here today. The G-8 leaders adopted an ambitious Africa Action Plan in support of NEPAD. We identified resources to deliver under the Action Plan. We put in place a follow-up process to ensure the effectiveness of the measures planned. And I know full well that my successor as G-8 Chair, President Chirac, shares my commitment to Africa.

Taken together, NEPAD and the G-8 Africa Action Plan stand to transform the relationship between G-8 Governments and those in Africa that are seeking to implement NEPAD. The time has come to go from talking to action, now that we have an action plan for a new partnership.

For African nations, this means giving life to NEPAD. African countries that will implement NEPAD in all of its aspects, including good governance, will enjoy enhanced assistance from the industrialized world. For G-8 partners, this means giving effect to the specific commitments contained in the Africa Action Plan. We must also ensure that all of our policies and actions reinforce those commitments, including the positions we will take in the Doha trade negotiations.

(*spoke in English*)

For the developed world as a whole, implementing NEPAD means making development assistance more effective and doing more to ensure that we are open to business with Africa. For business worldwide, this means re-evaluating commercial opportunities in Africa as the new economic conditions that NEPAD seeks to create take hold, and reconsidering the stereotype, all too deeply rooted, that investing money in Africa does not pay.

For Canada, the process of implementing the G-8 Africa Action Plan began on the very day in June that it was adopted. We announced that, within our fiscal

framework, Canada was committing $6 billion in new and existing resources over five years to support African development. We intend to double our development assistance from current levels by 2010. At least half of that increase will be earmarked for Africa. We have reaffirmed our commitment to untie Canadian aid. We announced that, as of 1 January 2003, Canada will eliminate tariffs and quotas on almost all products from the least developed countries.

Agricultural subsidies in rich nations remain a fundamental obstacle to African development. The annual level of all official development assistance from developed countries amounts to $50 billion. Subsidies by these same countries for their domestic agriculture exceed $350 billion annually. These huge supports put a strain on treasuries, depress prices and effectively shut out producers from developing countries. Canada calls on developed nations to make the elimination of such subsidies a top priority.

NEPAD is about coming to terms with the fact that the continued marginalization of Africa from the globalization process and the social exclusion of the vast majority of its peoples are profoundly contrary to the global interest. Helping Africa get on its feet is in our interest from the perspective of our common humanity and from the perspective of creating a more prosperous world with new markets. It is profoundly in our self-interest from the point of view of our own security. We have seen right here in New York the tragic consequences that can result from failed States in faraway places. Simply put, we cannot afford not to address these issues. This is the time to act. NEPAD is the blueprint. The rest is simply a matter of political will.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Right Honourable Mr. Pakalitha B. Mosisili, Prime Minister and Minister for Defence of Public Service of the Kingdom of Lesotho.

Mr. Mosisili (Lesotho): Abject poverty, backwardness and ignorance that afflict the majority of our African populations have triggered new thinking on the part of African leaders, who have resolved to develop a deliberate and strategic approach to ensure Africa's socio-economic and political advancement. Thus, NEPAD has been a product of this common vision and shared conviction by us Africans.

NEPAD encourages good governance, respect for the rule of law and human rights, and this can only be realized where democracy is the order of the day, which is also a *sine qua non* for economic growth and sustainable development. The basis for these noble ideals is the notion of the African Peer Review Mechanism, to which African leaders are to voluntarily submit themselves within the NEPAD framework. NEPAD calls for African countries individually and collectively to embark on development strategies that will eradicate poverty and ensure sustainable growth and development in Africa.

As I said, the underlying notion for NEPAD is genuine partnership between African countries and the international community, based on shared responsibility and mutual interest. In the long run, NEPAD seeks to reverse the marginalization of Africa owing to the globalization process, as well as the social exclusion of its 340 million people, who are currently living on less than $1 per day.

NEPAD recognizes the role of the private sector in the development processes of Africa. The mobilization of the requisite domestic resources for reinvestment into key sectors such as infrastructure, information and technology, human resource development, agriculture and market access is dependent on a healthy and economically functioning private sector.

We are, however, cognizant of the gap that exists between the least developed countries and the industrialized countries in terms of resource distribution and technological know-how. We therefore call upon the latter countries to complement our efforts in order to achieve the objectives of NEPAD.

I must hasten to dispel the misunderstanding that exists about the relationship between the African Union and NEPAD. To my delegation, NEPAD is an African Union programme. The African Union serves as the apex of the institutional framework for African socio-economic and political development so that Africa can ultimately extricate itself from the bondage of marginalization and exclusion in the globalizing world. To that end, we call upon the United Nations system to coordinate and synchronize activities related to the NEPAD plan of action, while the international community plays its supportive role in ensuring the success of NEPAD and providing renewed impetus for the development of Africa.

Africa has learned a painful but useful lesson from the implementation of the United Nations New

Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). My delegation recalls that the evaluation of UN-NADAF's performance revealed, among other things, that the envisaged growth rate of 6 per cent for Africa was never achieved and that, instead, official development assistance declined by 33 per cent. To my delegation, the NEPAD targets are not very different from those under UN-NADAF, except in terms of ownership of the programme. It is therefore our strong conviction that the conclusions in the report of the Secretary-General on the evaluation of UN-NADAF are correct. My delegation therefore welcomes that report and requests the Secretary-General to ensure its implementation, particularly with regard to section three, which provides an incisive analysis of how the United Nations intends to support the implementation of NEPAD.

In conclusion, my delegation welcomes the recently adopted G-8 Africa Action Plan. As much as the Action Plan is undoubtedly a valuable and living framework for a new partnership between Africa and the G-8, we appeal to the G-8 to observe the spirit of NEPAD, which emphasizes partnership between African countries and the international community. Members of the international community should be more supportive and explicit in outlining, in concrete terms, the details of their commitment to NEPAD.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Levy Patrick Mwanawasa, President of the Republic of Zambia.

President Mwanawasa: On behalf of my delegation, allow me to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing a special session specifically to discuss Africa's new economic initiative, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). This initiative emerged from the realization of the increasing poverty levels of the peoples on the continent and their marginalization at the global level. As all of us are aware, high levels of poverty lead to political instability, which in turn leads to more poverty and under-development, thereby perpetuating a vicious circle of impoverishment and social alienation. NEPAD is therefore a plan for the socio-economic development of the African continent.

In the year 2000, the leaders of the world adopted and committed themselves to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. For the continent of Africa, efforts were made in the past to break the vicious circle Africa finds itself in. A number of initiatives were put in place, both at the regional and international levels. At regional level, we have the Cairo Plan of Action, the Abuja Treaty and the Lagos Plan of Action, just to name a few. At the international level, we had the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), the Lomé Cotonou Agreement, the African Growth Opportunity Act (AGOA), the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), the Group of 8 Okinawa Declaration of 2001 and the G-8 Africa Action Plan, recently adopted at Kananaskis, Canada, in July 2002.

The critics of the NEPAD initiative question the difference it will make, given that even with the initiatives previously put in place in Africa, the continent's poverty is increasing. The answer is self-explanatory. NEPAD is different from its predecessors because it is a holistic, comprehensive and integrated strategic framework for the social and economic development of Africa. The NEPAD document provides a vision for Africa, a statement of the problems facing the continent and a programme of action to resolve clearly identified problems in order to realize the vision for a bright future by the peoples of Africa.

It is also different from its predecessors in that it is a plan conceived and developed by African leaders. The primary objective of NEPAD is to eradicate poverty in Africa; to place African peoples, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development; and to halt the marginalization of Africa in the global process. Zambia is confident that, with the political will of the African leaders, the continent can break the shackles of poverty through the implementation of the NEPAD programme of action. The implementation of priority sectoral plans such as those aimed at bridging the infrastructure gap and developing human resources, and those relating to agriculture, manufacturing and science and technology, are the goals Africa has set for itself under NEPAD.

While it is recognized that this new initiative is put forward by the Africans and is for the Africans themselves to implement, we cannot ignore the importance of assistance from the international community through increased official development assistance and by the United Nations system. Africa will still need debt relief, foreign direct investment and official development assistance in addition to domestic

resource mobilization by the African countries themselves. I therefore wish to welcome the positive bilateral and multilateral support already shown for NEPAD.

We should also not lose sight of the importance of South-South cooperation, which extends to other developing countries outside Africa. I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to other developing countries to extend their support to NEPAD as they have done with other initiatives on Africa. We are looking forward to practical support as we move ahead with the implementation of the initiative.

In conclusion, I would like to appeal to my fellow African leaders to commit ourselves to the goals and objectives we have set for ourselves for the good and the betterment of our peoples. The ball is in our court, and we should maintain the political will we have shown so far on NEPAD. If we show commitment to our initiative, the international community will support our efforts. In unity, we shall succeed.

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Festus G. Mogae, MP, President of the Republic of Botswana.

President Mogae: I am delighted to take part in the deliberations of this special session devoted to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

It is comforting that this high-level plenary meeting is taking place in the final stages of the review and appraisal of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa (UN- NADAF). NEPAD and the United Nations Development Agenda for Africa must be mutually reinforcing processes.

NEPAD represents a strategy for addressing the issues of peace and security, democratic and accountable governance, poverty eradication and observance of the rule of law, all of which are included in the Millennium Declaration. The achievement of NEPAD's goals would contribute meaningfully to a more just and more secure global environment.

NEPAD is an embodiment of the African leaders' determination to deal decisively with Africa's economic and political problems. It is an undertaking by leaders to ensure a climate conducive to sustainable development. The NEPAD framework recognizes the cardinal role that development stakeholders such as Governments, political leaders, labour, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, civil society and the international community have to play in the development process.

NEPAD is a multifaceted partnership in which key players have to deliver on their obligations. NEPAD does not place the onus for the raising of the living standards of the African people on official development assistance, although it recognizes its catalytic role in the early phases of the turnaround.

NEPAD is being criticized, even from within Africa. This is yet another manifestation of the democratic tide sweeping through the continent. Some of the criticisms will contribute to sharpening NEPAD's programmes. To the dogmatic opponents of NEPAD, who see red when they think Africa is relating too closely with the international community — which they blame for all of Africa's present maladies — I can only say that they should come up with viable alternatives. Even then, isolationism is not an option in today's increasingly interdependent world, and no one should provide solace to Afro-pessimists.

NEPAD should not be judged by isolated episodes but by the general advancement of the majority of the inhabitants of the African continent. It is obviously unrealistic to expect all countries to attain the same goals overnight. It is equally unfair to hold the entire NEPAD programme to ransom on account of developments in a few countries.

Without the support of the international community, NEPAD cannot successfully resolve some of Africa's intractable problems, such as intra-State and cross-border conflicts, the debilitating external debt, declining levels of official development assistance, the widening digital divide, and, above all, the restricted access of African products to developed-country markets.

I would like to pay tribute to the Group of Eight leaders for their G-8 Africa Action Plan and continuous constructive engagement in the NEPAD Agenda. I implore the rest of the international community to follow their example and to make concrete commitments to support the revitalization of the African continent.

In this regard, this special session should lead to more determined efforts by the United Nations system to play its part not only directly, but also by acting as a catalyst for a global compact on Africa's development. Over the years, developing nations have counted on the

goodwill and unwavering support of the United Nations to advance the cause of the poor and the voiceless, and Africa is no exception. We shall continue to count on the solidarity of the United Nations system.

I wish to appeal to the international community to rally behind NEPAD and the African Union in the war against poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, unemployment and underdevelopment.

We Africans reaffirm our commitment to upholding high standards of political, economic and corporate governance and of democratic and accountable rule, and, above all, to respecting the human rights of those we govern. Raising the living standards of the African people is an urgent matter. The continued underdevelopment of Africa denies many of our peoples the basic necessities of life, as well as human rights and dignity, all of which are at the core of the United Nations mandate. This is not the time for ideological pronouncements, but for action — and action speaks louder than words.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. José Maria Pereira Neves, Prime Minister of the Republic of Cape Verde.

Mr. Neves (Cape Verde) (*spoke in Portuguese; English text furnished by the delegation*): I would like to start by praising the decision of the United Nations to dedicate a special session of the General Assembly to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), thus providing an interactive dialogue at the highest level on the combination of efforts aimed at assuring the success of this venture.

Likewise, I would like to congratulate the African heads of State present here today, who in the framework of the African Union undertook this initiative as well as the responsibility of shaping a realistic vision for Africa's development. It is a vision that reflects the will and determination to break away from the practices and dependencies that have held back Africa's development and the realization of the continent's great potentials for the benefit of its citizens. NEPAD translates the deep beliefs of a continent, which, supported by a strong decision to act, takes on the hope of reversing the fatalism of its destiny by relaunching itself on the path of development, thereby assuming its rightful position in the community of nations.

The broad and favourable support received by the project at the international level, namely the backing of the United Nations, the European Union, the Group of 8, the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) and many other international bodies, contributes to strengthening the expectations that a genuine partnership can be created between developed nations and Africa. This partnership should be based on mutual interests and benefits, shared commitments and reliable agreements in which the private sector is assured a crucial role. We are well aware that much has to be done in order to fulfil these noble objectives. Past experiences should guide us with prudence to choose realistic paths and solutions that both respond to the interests of all parties — namely, those of the peoples of our countries — and respect the environment.

We are also aware of existing concerns from different quarters that need to be addressed if we do not want to run the risk of losing the consensus that is indispensable for the success of this vital project. For this reason, it is essential to engage civil society in a permanent dialogue to refine the principles and objectives of NEPAD in order to ensure the ownership of the Partnership by the people themselves, and not only by the elites. Moreover, while NEPAD is a development initiative based primarily on a partnership between Africa and the developed world, it is important to engage major players from the South, to tap the enormous potentials and wealth of their experiences and to promote South-South cooperation in support of NEPAD.

The recent Summit in Johannesburg clearly demonstrated that the world is becoming increasingly conscious of the peculiar conditions of small island States and the challenges they are confronted with. They have to cope with their vulnerabilities and face accrued responsibility in preserving environmental balances and, because of their strategic situation, in combating organized crime and terrorism. Similarly, at the level of the multilateral trade system, there is an increasing awareness that the imbalances and inequalities affecting developing island nations should be corrected and that effective support is necessary so that they can actively integrate themselves into the global economy.

The extreme vulnerability of insular economies, which magnifies at the local level the disturbances experienced in international markets, is an element that

cannot be overlooked. Cape Verde is an island nation whose small area, dispersion among numerous islands and geographic remoteness are aggravated by its exposure to climatic factors that permanently place its ecosystem at risk. The country's development is strongly conditioned by the high costs of insularity and the impossibility of taking advantage of economies of scale.

Cape Verde thus advocates that NEPAD's strategy should contemplate the particularities of island countries, which entail inherent features and fragilities that hamper them and sometimes make participation in major regional infrastructure projects unfeasible. In addition, NEPAD should support international initiatives favouring small island developing States, namely, the Barbados Programme of Action, and work in close cooperation with their Governments to reduce the negative effects of insularity. My Government would like to express its full readiness to actively participate in discussions leading to the preparation of a strategy for the synchronized integration of island States in the great continental NEPAD project. In that regard, Cape Verde hopes next year to host an international meeting dedicated specifically to defining the outlines of participation by island States in the NEPAD project.

With the launching of NEPAD, we are faced with a unique opportunity to reverse the destiny of, and build a prosperous future for, millions of women and men throughout the continent. It is up to us, as leaders, to build trust among our citizens and to assure them that we will work tirelessly so that they become the main beneficiaries of the enormous potentials existing in our continent.

Organization of work

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I should like to bring to the attention of the General Assembly two organizational matters.

In view of the large number of speakers inscribed on the list of speakers — 80 so far — and in order to allow the Assembly to listen to all the speakers today, it is the intention of the President of the Assembly to strictly enforce the five-minute time limit on statements.

Unless I hear any objection, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed in this fashion.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: In that connection, a light system has been installed at the speaker's rostrum that functions as follows: a green light will be activated at the start of a speaker's statement; an orange light will be activated 30 seconds before the end of the five minutes; and a red light will be activated when the five-minute limit has elapsed. I appeal to speakers to cooperate in observing the five-minute time limit for their statements so that all those inscribed on the list of speakers can be heard within the time allocated to us today.

Also, given that delegations have had ample time to inscribe their names on the list of speakers, I should like to propose that the list of speakers for the debate on the New Partnership for Africa's Development be closed this morning at 11.30 a.m. Our meeting this morning will be extended to 1.30 p.m. Unless I hear any objection, I shall consider that the Assembly agrees to this proposal.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Jan Petersen, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway.

Mr. Petersen (Norway): The creation by African leaders of the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) opens up an historic opportunity for Africa to take control of its own destiny. These events bear witness to the new resolve and commitment African leaders are showing in shaping the future of their continent. NEPAD offers a clear-sighted vision for Africa's future.

The challenges facing Africa are enormous and diverse, as the Millennium Declaration clearly recognizes. The States of Africa have peoples who speak over 1,000 languages. Their cultures are rich and diverse. The challenges they face are specific to each and every State and community, but their aspirations are the same: education and health, security and income opportunities so that people can make a better life for themselves. Nowhere are the challenges greater.

In initiating the New Partnership for Africa's Development, Africa's leaders have created a powerful conceptual base for addressing these challenges. In pledging to consolidate democracy and build good governance, to promote peace and security and to

uphold human rights, NEPAD could unleash and set in motion the great potential inherent in the peoples of Africa. My appeal to the heads of State present here is to show true leadership in translating these intentions into concrete action and to continue to address this issue also vis-à-vis all leaders on the continent.

NEPAD builds on the many earlier initiatives to promote development in Africa. These initiatives did not always work as well as they were intended to, often because of lack of political commitment. The international community must admit its share of responsibility. We must also have the courage to admit that the absence of accountability and responsibility in governance has played an important part as well.

Against this background, we have great expectations for the NEPAD African Peer Review Mechanism created to address these problems. It will assess individual countries' implementation of the Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance. This is an innovative and courageous move. The peer review process is a tool that will be decisive in attaining the objectives of NEPAD and in realizing the vision of the African Union. The Norwegian Government will actively support the development of the peer review mechanism. In particular, we welcome the call to development partners to include the monitoring of their own policies and practices in the review process.

Time and time again, progress in Africa has been destroyed by conflict and insecurity. Millions have lost their lives. Precious natural resources have been misspent to fuel war. The Peace and Security Initiative is therefore the strategically most important element in NEPAD. It is designed to support the implementation of the African Union Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council. The adoption of the Protocol signifies a strong resolve to promote peace, security and stability in Africa by Africans. We welcome the intention to work closely with the United Nations Security Council. Bold and resolute political leadership, sustained over the next decade and beyond, is indispensable for making the Protocol operational and effective.

The Norwegian Government will continue and reinforce its support for peace-building efforts in Africa and for the development of institutions and capabilities for conflict prevention, management and resolution in the context of the Africa Union and regional organizations.

In the course of the 1990s, foreign aid fell from $35 per capita to $19. Non-oil commodity export prices fell by a third for many African countries. The playing field has not been level. We need to reverse the marginalization of Africa, but sustainable economic growth — so central to NEPAD — cannot be generated from outside. We have declared ourselves ready to increase our efforts. Debt relief and progress towards fairer trade, improved market access and increased investment continue to be the core issues for economic development and poverty reduction in Africa. Norway is committed to working with African countries and international partners to achieve real progress in these areas.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Maher El Sayed, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt.

Mr. Maher El Sayed (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like at the outset to convey the greetings of President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak of the Arab Republic of Egypt. The President has mandated me to work on his behalf towards the achievement of practical and serious results in support of our continent in its development efforts through the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) initiative. Those results should strengthen security, peace, stability and the achievement of the socio-economic development goals of our continent through the deepening and consolidation of democracy.

What we put before the Assembly today through NEPAD, to the formulation of which President Mubarak contributed, is an integrated African vision of the problems and questions of the continent. It is a comprehensive strategy to address those problems and questions. It is backed by a firm political will and a conscious realization of the responsibilities of the African peoples and their leadership for the achievement of the desired objectives.

Our commitment is based on a number of principles, first among which is its "Africanness" and African ownership. NEPAD is an African vision of the questions and problems of Africa. It is a comprehensive strategy devised by African intellect and implemented by African hands. The second priority is according priority to the regional dimension in the formulation of the initiative and in its projects

and programmes serving the interests of various regions of Africa as a part of the comprehensive African common good. Thirdly, NEPAD puts forward a new vision for a constructive and serious partnership with the United Nations and its various agencies, as well as with developed countries and the international organizations and institutions concerned. The partnership aims at translating the objectives of NEPAD into concrete results on the basis of joint cooperation, mutual interests and mutual respect. Fourthly, in this context, Africa proceeds from the collective premise that it cannot accept selectivity or conditionality. It makes no distinction between the African countries benefiting from the initiative. The objective is common and the interests are mutual.

Our insistence on the African ownership of NEPAD does not mean that we ignore the need for an equitable and healthy partnership between us and those capable of assisting us. We are aware that the concept of interdependence is the basis of relations between economic entities in the international arena. Indeed, we look forward to the establishment of such partnerships with the United Nations, the other international institutions concerned with the questions of socio-economic development and the developed and donor countries. This should respond to the legitimate demands of Africa. It would correct Africa's economic marginalization and would address the imbalance in the world economic system and in the international trade system. This will be in the interest of all peoples and countries, developed and developing alike.

While reaffirming anew that NEPAD is not a list of financial demands nor a statement of Africa's need of outside assistance, Africa reiterates that its objective is the establishment of a partnership with the developed countries, a partnership based on the concepts of justice, common responsibility and the need for each side to honour its commitments and obligations.

In this context, we deem it necessary to accord special priority to the following matters. The United Nations must continue to mobilize the necessary support for NEPAD and the cause of development in Africa. The role of the United Nations and its programmes and specialized agencies in support of the development efforts in Africa must be made more effective, as there is a need for the United Nations to harmonize its programmes with NEPAD. Coordination between the United Nations and its relevant organs, on the one hand, and the African Governments and African economic groups, on the other, is important for ensuring the implementation of the objectives, programmes and projects of NEPAD. The question of the external debt of the African countries must be addressed, whether by the cancellation or by the alleviation of the debt burden. This should enable those resources to be channelled to the development programme in the continent.

We also accord special attention to honouring the commitment of the developed countries to reach the official development assistance target of 0.7 per cent of their gross national product, as this assistance has consistently declined during recent years in comparison to their levels in the early 1990s. African efforts to attract additional foreign investments to the continent should be supported. The developed countries should renounce protectionist policies, as they run counter to the concept of international trade liberalization, on the one hand, and to those countries' commitments in the World Trade Organization, on the other, and to the commitment to the principle of mutual responsibility. There is a need to establish mechanisms to ensure that the developed and donor countries honour their commitments vis-à-vis African countries.

Africa has adopted a serious and comprehensive initiative: the African Union and, through it, NEPAD. This initiative responds to the needs of its peoples. It reiterates the commitment and determination of the continent's leaders to shoulder their responsibilities, thus achieving the hopes of development, security, peace and prosperity for the peoples of the continent and its coming generations. The whole world is called upon to help Africa in this endeavour because the future of each component part of the world depends ultimately on the future of all other component parts.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Per Stig Moeller, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark, speaking on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Moeller (Denmark): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, as well as the European Free Trade Area country of the European Economic Area, Iceland, all align themselves with this statement.

The European Union is greatly encouraged by the new hope and prospects for Africa presented by New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and by the creation of the African Union in Durban on 9 July 2002. Those two landmark events offer an historic opportunity for Africa to take control of her destiny and to lay a new foundation for development in Africa. In this respect, the European Union regards the African Union and NEPAD as mutually reinforcing.

The development challenges facing Africa are enormous. A little more than two years ago, world leaders committed themselves to working together to meet a series of Millennium Development Goals. The overarching goal is halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015. A vast number of those people live in Africa. The special development challenges facing Africa were recognized at the Millennium Summit. The primary responsibility for facing those challenges lies with Africa. But Africa cannot address them alone. A renewed development partnership between Africa and the international community is needed to support Africa in its efforts.

The European Union considers that NEPAD is the basis for such a renewed partnership. The European Union is a strong supporter of NEPAD and the promise it holds for African development as a programme of the African Union. NEPAD should therefore become the overall policy framework for the international community's relations with Africa in general and for the United Nations in particular.

A central feature of NEPAD is the link between economic growth, development and the principles of political and economic good governance, and the rule of law, democratization and respect for human rights. In the opinion of the European Union, the African Peer Review Mechanism will be central in making these NEPAD principles become a reality. Good governance cannot be imported from outside. It is the will and ability of individual African nations that will carry the day.

NEPAD is also defined by the African ownership and the progressive leadership that it embodies. It is an initiative taken by Africans for Africans. It is for African nations to demonstrate their commitment to give real content to NEPAD. Delivery of commitments on the African side must be matched with delivery of commitments on the part of the international community.

At the Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey in March, developing countries and developed countries agreed to enter into a new, mutually binding partnership. An additional $12 billion per year was pledged for global development assistance.

It is first and foremost at the national and subregional levels that NEPAD will be translated into action. The European Union looks to further clarification and increased coordination among all development partners on the implementation of NEPAD, through the national Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and the subregional organizations, as well as at the continental level. The European Union envisages supporting NEPAD primarily through existing cooperation frameworks. The European Commission is ready to work with NEPAD on defining priorities, not least in human resources development and infrastructure.

At the G-8 summit in Kananaskis, the G-8 Africa Action Plan was adopted as a framework for action in support of NEPAD. The G-8 members agreed that half or more of their new development assistance commitments announced at Monterrey could be directed to African nations that govern justly, invest in their own people and promote economic freedom. They also committed themselves to providing sufficient resources to eradicate polio by 2005, in addition to their ongoing commitments to combat malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS, and to working with African partners to deliver a joint plan by 2003 for the development of African capability to undertake peace support operations. The European Union will also work on securing fairer trade conditions for Africa.

In conclusion, let me say that business as usual will not promote development in Africa. The African leaders and people have raised the stakes with the adoption of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The international community should be prepared to match this. The European Union has.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Louis Michel, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium.

Mr. Michel (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I would like to salute the vision of the future, the sense of history and political courage of the founders of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). would like to convey my esteem to the Presidents of South Africa, Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria and Senegal. This initiative opens the way to a new relation with the international community and an ambition based on a noble concept of the future for their populations. By giving the project a regional perspective, they will resist the temptation of withdrawing into themselves, while at the same time giving the international community a special responsibility it cannot, this time, avoid. In fact, this initiative presents a courageous challenge to break with an antiquated paternalistic, if not humiliating, cooperation of the past.

When the Belgian presidency learned of this project, we became quickly convinced that it broke decisively with the classic concept of partnership that had existed amongst our peoples.

NEPAD was conceived by Africans for Africans. It affirms that there is no development without good governance. There is no democratization without respect for human rights. It seeks to place the primary responsibility for development on African Governments themselves. NEPAD shares the ambitions and views of another great project, the African Union. In making the commitment to submit their policies to rigorous examination by their peers African Governments make a courageous and convincing political choice.

Millions of Africans are threatened with famine today. The tragedy of HIV/AIDS has brought down the life expectancy dramatically. Throughout Africa, there is misery, violence and, too often, we see despair. NEPAD brings new hope and we cannot let it fail for lack of foreign support. We must all mobilize to support it.

The volume of assistance to Africa is far from sufficient. Even worse, Africa receives only one quarter of the aid for the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations system. This is much less than what Africa should receive in development aid if we are to take seriously the Millennium Summit development goal of reducing poverty by one half between now and 2015.

I think back to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (WSSD) with a little hope and a lot of disappointments. We did not show true solidarity, yet there was widespread agreement in our analyses. But there was not enough political willpower.

We are going to adopt a new political declaration, but only actions count. For the donors, they must make a substantial effort in three basic areas: financing, debt and access to markets. It is time for the international community to pay its dues to this magnificent continent that was the cradle of humanity.

As far as Belgium is concerned, we increased our aid this year for the fourth consecutive time. And between now and 2010, we will reach the objective of 0.7 per cent of GDP to provide assistance. More than sixty percent of our aid goes to Africa. Access to our financial institutions and to our markets and technology, these are the forms our assistance to Africa take and we are convinced that NEPAD will become the framework for relations between the United Nations and Africa.

To sum up, during the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Durban, together we noted our will to put an end to the darkest chapters of our history, so that we could build a new relation based on mutual respect, solidarity and partnership. NEPAD lays the groundwork for this partnership. The New Partnership for Development in Africa is a hope, first and foremost, translated into a strategy and a project. But it is more than that. It is no less than the most noble ambition, the ambition of liberating Africa from lack of action, from pain and the complexes of an unfair destiny that brought only humiliation, exploitation and unhappiness.

Make no mistake. This initiative is an act of optimistic liberation which will finally put an end to the injustices of Africa's history. Belgium, more than others, owes steadfast support to Africa because a large part of our history is Africa's history. And the common pages of that history were not all written in the ink of generosity and respect.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by Her Excellency, Mrs. Lydie Polfer, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade of Luxembourg.

Mrs. Lydie Polfer (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): Since the launching of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) a fresh wind seems to be blowing across the African continent. Few initiatives of this kind have previously received such response all over the world and have given rise to so much hope.

As the President of the European Union said, speaking on behalf of the fifteen nations, Luxembourg welcomes and is gratified by this new impetus, this new dynamic creation. NEPAD is an invitation to a fresh constructive partnership between Africa and the international community to reduce the development gap. Luxembourg accepts this invitation and expects fruitful cooperation to result from it.

In 1992 at the Rio de Janeiro Conference, the Luxembourg government made a solemn commitment to achieve, by the end of the decade, the target of 0.7 per cent of its GDP devoted to official development assistance. That goal was achieved in 2000 and our new target is to increase our aid to one per cent of GDP by 2005.

This political commitment is reflected also by a choice of method. Over the years and with an increase in its resources, Luxembourg's cooperation has undergone a process of carefully considered change. At the end of that process, the project approach was considered too piecemeal and rigid and was replaced by a programmatic and multi-year approach. Within this new framework, a paramount place is given to respect for democratic principles, human rights and the rule of the law and good governance. Since that time, partnership has become the keystone of Luxembourg's cooperation.

In practice, each programme or project must form part of the country's development plan and must be listed on its set of priorities. Within this framework, special emphasis is placed upon the exchange of knowledge and know-how for the development of vocational aptitudes and management in the partner countries. Luxembourg has established special partnerships with six African countries and NEPAD's priority sectors form part of Luxembourg's main sectors for cooperation. Thus, more than 80 per cent of our bilateral cooperation is devoted to infrastructures and social services, while projects in the health and education sectors cover more than 50 per cent of our funds. If there is a broad convergence of spirit and approach, Luxembourg attaches, nevertheless, great importance to the idea that its partner countries should shoulder their proper share of the responsibility in implementing common endeavours.

Good governance, both political and economic, is henceforth recognized rightly as an essential condition for the success of development activities. Transparency in management and participation of the people in decision-making processes, especially at the local level, are two important concepts which are regarded as essential to measure the degree to which beneficiaries assume ownership of development activities, because it is the feeling of being involved that in fact makes development sustainable.

NEPAD provides for a peer review mechanism; this mechanism is in fact one of the specific features of the New Partnership. NEPAD is an African initiative that is managed by Africans for Africans. It represents a commitment of African leaders to their people, but also a mutual commitment. To carry out this oath and the promises that stem from it, the countries of Africa can count on the support of my country.

Africa has taken courageous new initiatives, and it is up to us in the international community to be with Africa and to support Africa in that regard.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency, Tang Jiaxuan, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of China.

Mr. Jiaxuan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The high-level plenary meeting of the United Nations General Assembly to consider how to support the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is once again focusing the world's attention on issues of Africa's development. On behalf of the Chinese Government, I wish to express our appreciation for the efforts of the United Nations that have made this conference possible.

The official launching of the African Union in July of this year marked a new historical stage in Africa's pursuit of common development and rejuvenation. However, generally speaking, African countries have yet to enjoy the benefits of economic globalization. The gap between Africa and the rest of the world in overall development is still widening. This is not only a challenge to African countries, but also an issue that the international community must pay closer attention to and endeavour to address.

NEPAD is an important step taken by African countries to meet the challenges of the new century through greater unity and self-improvement. We support African countries in their unremitting efforts to achieve all NEPAD objectives in light of their needs and the actual conditions for Africa's renaissance. The United Nations has an irreplaceable role in promoting African development, and a constructive role in promoting the international community's support for NEPAD.

The international community, especially the developed countries, have the responsibility and obligation to adopt more active and effective measures to create a sound international environment for the economic development of African countries. The developed countries should reverse the declining trend of development assistance as soon as possible. They should work to ensure that their official development assistance accounts for 0.7 per cent of their gross national product, to reduce or cancel the debts of African countries, to expand and improve the market access of African countries, and to transfer applicable technologies to Africa. They should also help African countries to build capacity to combat diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

China has long maintained a good and cooperative relationship with African countries, and is following closely the progress of Africa. China successfully hosted the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation at the Ministerial Conference Beijing 2000, and established relevant follow-up mechanisms. We have begun to cancel 10 billion yuan of African countries' debts to China, as we had promised. Follow-up actions in the technical and economic cooperation fields, and many others, are also under way.

The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation and NEPAD share the same objective of promoting cooperation and common development. We believe that the active implementation of Forum follow-up activities by China and Africa will be a strong boost to the process of African development and NEPAD. We will, as always, support reasonable demands and just propositions of the African countries. We sincerely hope to see a gradual and full implementation of NEPAD.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by Her Excellency, Mrs. Agnes Van Ardenne, Minister for Development Cooperation of the Kingdom of The Netherlands.

Mrs. Van Ardenne (Netherlands) (*spoke in English*): The whole world needs to work together to secure Africa's rightful place on the world stage. Both Africa and the developed world have to live up to their mutual commitments.

NEPAD shows that a growing number of African leaders feel a strong sense of urgency. I applaud their leadership. NEPAD is a fine initiative, given the urgent need for ownership and for leaders in Africa to take responsibility for solving Africa's problems. The proposed Peer Reviews demonstrate that Africans take Africa's problems very seriously indeed. I see NEPAD as a sign that Africans share a resolve to prevent conflict and improve their policies and governance. Indeed, genuinely owned and improved policies and governance are the requirements for development. And it must be understood that for NEPAD to succeed it must be Africa-driven.

However, Africa cannot walk this difficult new path alone. We rich countries must fulfil our part of the bargain and create room for Africa on the world stage. And it is not just Governments that need to be involved. Development assistance is a common investment in a common future. For that investment to succeed, we need partners from many sides: multilateral organizations, Governments, the private sector and civil society.

We need better results from all the efforts aimed at fighting poverty: African domestic resources, debt relief, export income, foreign direct investments and donor aid. I repeat my appeal to all donors to honour the 0.7 per cent commitment on development assistance. We will have to increase aid in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Recent political change in the Netherlands did not affect our firm commitment to earmark 0.8 per cent of our gross domestic product for development cooperation. Moreover, the Netherlands will spend at least half of its bilateral aid budget in Africa.

But money alone is not enough. We must pursue Africa-friendly economic policies. Besides strengthening local and regional markets in Africa, we have to open our markets. We have to abolish subsidies

that distort trade and harm the environment. The coherence of our policy in areas such as trade and development remains an absolute priority. If wealthy countries do not drastically reduce their subsidies on products such as sugar, cotton, meat and milk, then we cannot credibly call ourselves true partners to the Millennium Development Goals and to NEPAD. That is why our policy focus will be more integrated than ever before, and Africa is the focal point of this integrated policy.

Let us also bring in the private sector to reverse the downturn in foreign investment. In 1990 2 per cent of all investments went to Africa. Ten years later this figure had fallen to 0.35 per cent. In Johannesburg we formed partnerships, for example, on food security in Ethiopia and in Eritrea. This is not the private sector hijacking sustainable development, but having an essential partner for development join the effort.

One thing we should not forget is that women in Africa are key partners in development. Numerous studies have pointed out that the inclusion of women is indispensable for sustainable development. How many more studies do we need to acknowledge this basic fact? I call upon African leaders to give women the necessary space to participate in development. How can we make our investment in development productive if we leave more than 50 per cent of our human potential under-utilized?

We industrialized nations must generously fulfil our commitment, and we must stand ready to assist when Africa needs our help. Last week in Johannesburg I signed an agreement with the South African Institute of International Affairs to disseminate NEPAD more widely in Africa and to support its efforts to involve civil society in the NEPAD Programme of Action.

We are ready to deploy efforts both great and small to help make NEPAD happen. It provides us with the right setting of good governance. In this setting, the combined efforts of both the developing and the industrialized world can and will make a decisive difference in the lives of Africans. Let us make NEPAD happen.

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by Her Excellency Mrs. Ana Palacio, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain.

Mrs. Palacio (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): We cannot ignore data that we have no choice but to call tragic: 6 million refugees, 20 million internally displaced persons, more than 120 million illiterates, an extremely high rate of infant mortality, and the impact of AIDS. We have a shared responsibility to act to radically change this reality Africa faces.

Africa, however, given its complexity, also is a source of hope. Positive developments have taken place recently across the continent and for all of us. I should like to highlight, together with the ongoing peace processes, the transition from the Organization of African Unity to the African Union, and its particular emphasis on the integration component. For my part, as a citizen of Spain and of Europe, I believe that integration mechanisms represent an important means of economic and social progress.

The Monterrey and Johannesburg Summits paid special attention to the fight against poverty across the African continent. In this context, it is noteworthy that, during the Spanish presidency of the European Union and within the framework of the Monterrey Consensus, agreement was reached among the countries of the European Union to mobilize an additional $20 billion between now and 2006.

In this context, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is a crucial initiative. Allow me to stress the fact that it addresses Africa's political, economic and social priorities in an extremely consistent and balanced way. Those priorities include: peace and security; political, economic and business governance; the importance of human resources; the establishment of basic infrastructures; access to global markets; and protection of the environment.

These priorities can be summed up along two major axes: conflict resolution and poverty eradication. The consequences of conflict and poverty are adversely affecting the African people in the form of arms trafficking; the tragedy of child soldiers; amputees whose limbs were lost to landmines; the lack, or even the destruction, of basic infrastructures; and the spread of infectious diseases, including the very serious problem of AIDS, which I mentioned earlier.

Spain welcomes with great satisfaction the decisive African leadership demonstrated by NEPAD, which shows that African States have taken on the responsibility of managing their own development. We deem it particularly positive that it is the African

Governments that will determine the evaluation criteria in implementing this initiative.

The Peer Review Mechanism, designed to verify the degree of compliance with the criteria of good governance, is a clear reflection of this African leadership and shows the need to establish clear and transparent guidelines within the framework of NEPAD to increase the flow of private investment to Africa. This objective, in parallel with the public financing boost provided by the G-8 Africa Action Plan, also through NEPAD, represents a window of opportunity for the integration of the African economies in an increasingly globalized world.

Eradicating poverty is our common goal. Let me stress in this context the indispensable role of African women. They have placed themselves at the front line of development, despite the many difficulties they must endure. It is therefore essential to insist on the education of girls, food safety and access to drinking water and to health services, and to ensure that these priorities are taken into account in all development projects in Africa, in keeping with the objectives set by NEPAD itself.

Spain and the European Union have been following with interest these developments in the context of the Cairo process and of the European Union's political dialogue with Africa since the G-8 Group of Donors Meeting for the G-8 Summit and the Kananaskis Summit itself.

It has been said that historical sea changes do not start when things go wrong, but rather when it is discerned that they can be changed. The sum total of the initiatives pooled in the crucible of NEPAD amount to a genuine revolution in terms of Africa's role in the international community. My country — a bridge between Europe and Africa for geographical and cultural reasons as well as reasons of commitment — is ready to play its role in this historical process of mutual enhancement.

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Brian Cowen, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland.

Mr. Cowen (Ireland): The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Mr. Per Stig Moeller, has already addressed this high-level meeting of the General Assembly on behalf of the European Union. Ireland associates itself fully with his remarks.

Building hope, taking stock, looking to the future and meeting challenges are the bedrock themes of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). NEPAD is a courageous and honest blueprint for action — not just for Africa, but for all of us. NEPAD is about new hope, because the formation of the African Union and the development of NEPAD offer imaginative perspectives and opportunities for all the peoples of Africa.

NEPAD is also about challenges, because what is at stake is not just a new partnership within Africa for Africa's development. NEPAD offers clear and detailed goals to African Governments and the peoples of Africa. Now the task of implementation begins, and that will require a lot of courage, hard work and determination.

NEPAD also offers similar challenges to the wider world beyond Africa, to join together in a new creative partnership for Africa, to build new bridges between Africa and the world, and at last to match our words with our deeds in helping to advance sustainable development in Africa and end its marginalization from the world economy.

NEPAD is an initiative by Africa and for Africa. Building on earlier initiatives, it offers goals and targets matched by an operational framework for meeting those targets. It states clearly to the international community: this is our way forward — but it must also involve a dual partnership. It is a partnership within Africa, but also a challenge to developed countries to agree on a new partnership for Africa.

This time, the new partnership in Africa and for Africa must succeed where other initiatives have failed. Supporting economic growth goals and advancing sustainable development in Africa must mean strong and imaginative action by the international community in tackling the structural causes of poverty in Africa; in offering fair market access to African countries for their products; in mobilizing financial, technical and investment resources to enable Africa to compete fairly with the rest of the world; in tackling unacceptable debt levels — in short, in giving a fair chance, on fair terms, to Africa. That is what Africa is asking for. And that, in fundamentals, is the basis of NEPAD.

Let me highlight four main themes that Ireland considers of special importance in implementing NEPAD.

First, a main strength of NEPAD is its recognition of strong links between advancing sustainable development and political and economic governance. Too many conflicts in recent decades have torn apart much of the fabric of Africa. Poor political and economic governance in some African countries has unfairly cast a blight on Africa as a whole, and too often the wider world has shrugged and said, "There is nothing we can do", in response to the daunting economic and social challenges facing Africa.

Now, Africa is putting forward its own clear political and economic governance standards, as well as new mechanisms, such as the African Peer Review Mechanism, to provide necessary institutional scaffolding. This is wise and courageous.

Secondly, NEPAD, as a programme of the African Union, will allow for creative interaction at a structural level so that political and economic actions and sustainable development policies advance in harmony. Over recent decades, we in Europe have travelled our own journey of putting in place structures of cooperation to serve all of our peoples. Africa is now embarked on the same path.

Thirdly, NEPAD cannot succeed unless the international community, explicitly and with strong actions, plays its part in support of NEPAD. The G-8 have made a good start in the Africa Action Plan agreed at Kananaskis. President Mbeki and other African leaders have rightly said that economic opportunities for Africa are also economic opportunities for developed countries.

Our words must now be matched by our deeds. In short, we in the international community must strongly support NEPAD proposals on resource mobilization; on trading opportunities, including, of course, in the Doha Round; on tackling debt; in the fight against HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases; and in allowing Africa the chance — for which it is asking — to become fully integrated into the global economy.

Developed countries must rapidly, and in full, meet the commitments given at the International Conference on Financing for Development, held at Monterrey last March.

With regard to Ireland's own commitment, my Prime Minister, Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, restated at the Johannesburg Summit Ireland's commitment to meet, by 2007, the United Nations target of spending 0.7 per cent of gross national product on international development cooperation.

Fourthly, the United Nations must provide strong and active leadership in support of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. This will involve all of the institutions of the United Nations, including the Security Council. The United Nations family must work in concert so that Africa moves to the forefront of our collective agenda.

Today we have an opportunity to express commitment and support for NEPAD. On behalf of Ireland, I do this warmly. And I do so with the absolute assurance of our support in the period ahead.

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Antonio Martins Da Cruz, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Portugal.

Mr. Da Cruz (Portugal): Today more than ever, people ask their leaders to make their dreams come true, confident of and optimistic for a better future.

Africa, more than any other continent, has been lacking such confidence and optimism for too long. Poverty, starvation, disease, war, debt, and corruption: all of those ills have been growing and are widespread. Because of them, Africa has become the forgotten continent. But as we say in Portugal, "Where there is life, there should be hope". I believe that it was with a similar mindset that the leaders of the continent conceived a far-reaching initiative, by Africans and for Africans, powered by a global vision and by global values.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) can be considered to be a stepping stone; it is the first single policy aimed at changing an entire continent. Its endorsement by the States of the African Union emphasizes its African leadership and African ownership of the development process. At the same time, it calls for a new partnership based on shared responsibility and mutual interest.

As with any partnership, this one is a two-way street; the obligations are reciprocal. As far as we non-Africans are concerned, it will mean efforts to make our development assistance more effective, as well as to ensure that our markets are open to business with Africa. That is the only way to allow capital flows to have a real impact in reducing poverty and increasing opportunity for African investments.

For the African partners, it will basically mean adding substance to the initiative through good governance and strengthening the democratic process, through sound economic policies; through the development of policies in the fields of health, education, agriculture, and the management of water resources; and through the improvement of regional trade.

The bottom line for the success of this initiative is that it must be embraced by all Africans. All levels of African society need to be active participants. The key is having Africans work together for the good of Africa.

Both the Western world and several countries in Africa have to share the blame for the fact that large parts of the continent are far poorer than they need to be. Despite our promises, we Europeans have not dedicated enough of our resources to fighting the problems of Africa or developed adequate cooperation policies. At the same time, some African leaders have resisted implementing measures to promote equitable income distribution, human rights, democracy and the rule of law. It is time to change that.

As is well known, in recent decades much of Portugal's foreign policy has been focused — as, indeed, it still is — on issues of special concern and interest to Africa.

The challenges facing the African continent are serious and complex. Unfortunately, we are daily reminded of them. Some African countries are still involved in international conflicts and civil wars or still suffer violent social unrest. Some African countries still have to make a full transition to democracy. One African out of two continues to live in absolute poverty, a situation that is only aggravated by the spreading of diseases.

But all coins have two sides, and the reality is also that Africa is breeding a new generation of leaders actively promoting a vast and unstoppable movement towards democracy, peace and economic and social progress. The past few decades have seen the majority of African nations making enormous progress in establishing political, economic and social structures, in ending age-old conflicts and in launching regional cooperation and integration.

What I would like to reiterate here is that Portugal is more than ever committed to its relationship with Africa. We cannot miss the opportunity to make sure that Africa moves from declarations to concrete deeds, from statements to specific results. Within the European Union (EU), we have from the very beginning reiterated our support for NEPAD. Portugal will remain an active defender of the initiative. The next Europe-Africa Summit, to be hosted by Portugal in April 2003, will also constitute a good opportunity to give new impetus to our common priorities. We believe that the agendas of the EU-Africa dialogue and of NEPAD have the potential to converge on all possible issues and to find a common approach to common solutions. NEPAD will not achieve success overnight. The situation in Africa is the result of generations of decline. This path will call for the commitment of all parties involved.

Finally, the role of the United Nations will continue to be central in ensuring that Africa remains on the global agenda.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Singapore, His Excellency Mr. S. Jayakumar.

Mr. Jayakumar (Singapore): I am honoured to be with you, Mr. President, at this high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly to consider how to support the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Africa faces a challenging future beset by a competitive and difficult external environment. The adoption of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) by the General Assembly in 1991 raised expectations with regard to better prospects for Africa. But the final report of UN-NADAF starkly concludes that, at the end of what was dubbed Africa's development decade, some 80 million more Africans live in poverty. However, at the same time, a quiet renaissance of positive leadership has emerged on the continent. NEPAD is a bold and timely initiative. With its ambitious agenda of renewal, NEPAD offers the promise of transforming Africa's developmental prospects.

It is encouraging to note that NEPAD stresses the importance of good governance and advocates the establishment of effective corporate and political governance in Africa. Equally important, the NEPAD Heads of State Forum will serve as a focal point to assess periodically the progress made by African

countries in meeting their governance commitments. The African Peer Review Mechanism is a particularly bold and novel experiment. Its success will set NEPAD apart from other initiatives that have sought to overcome Africa's fundamental problems.

NEPAD's core concept of an enhanced partnership, premised on mutual respect and accountability, has the potential to transform the stagnating aid relationship between Africa and the international donor community. The international community must not let that opportunity pass by. NEPAD's success depends ultimately on what African countries do individually and collectively, but it is also a test of the international community's willingness to deepen and sustain its engagement with Africa on a level playing field.

It was in that spirit that, a decade ago, my country established its Singapore Cooperation Programme, a technical assistance programme to help other developing countries adapt our experiences to their needs. Since the inception of the programme in 1992, we have trained more than 2,000 participants from 45 African countries. They come to Singapore for a wide variety of courses, whose subjects range from civil aviation to information technology, trade, tourism and the environment. As a small country, we stand ready to help in a practical and concrete way, both bilaterally and together with other countries and institutions.

The United Nations, in particular, has a role to play in supporting NEPAD. While NEPAD's relationship with the United Nations is pivotal, it remains largely undefined. Now that there is a universal recognition of the special needs of Africa, the key question is how the United Nations can help Africa and its development partners achieve lasting, tangible gains within the framework of NEPAD.

Let me elaborate on one way the United Nations can do that. During Singapore's presidency of the Security Council in May this year, I chaired an interactive debate on the role, function and programme of work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa. One of the conclusions drawn from that debate was that, as Africa undertakes its own initiatives under NEPAD, the Working Group can provide a channel for the international community to reciprocate and initiate reinforcing programmes. Under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul of Mauritius, the Group has been considering the ways in which the Security Council can best support NEPAD.

Today's meeting signals that the NEPAD initiative is already beginning to create a sense of renewal and partnership, both among Africans and between Africa and the rest of the world. NEPAD opens up the prospect for major resource flows of both aid and trade to Africa. It is poised to reset the development partnership on the basis of good governance in Africa. The United Nations and the international community should therefore build on that momentum quickly to help Africa realize its full potential.

The President: I now give the floor to the Secretary of State of the United States, His Excellency Mr. Colin Powell.

Mr. Powell (United States): I am very pleased to be here today to express the American Government's support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

President Bush and the American people care deeply about Africa. We share the same hopes and dreams as our African brothers and sisters. We all want to live in freedom and dignity, free from disease. We all want jobs that let us put bread on our tables, provide a roof over our heads and offer a decent education to our children. And, as the Secretary-General noted earlier this morning, we must also not lose our focus on combating Africa's greatest threat: HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases. We are here today because we are committed to supporting efforts by African Governments, by other organizations and by individuals to improve the lives of their people through lasting economic growth and development.

We meet at a time of optimism. The international community has come together around a common vision of shared responsibility for development. At the International Conference on Financing for Development held at Monterrey, and again at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held at Johannesburg, world leaders recognized the need for a true partnership to tap into development financing from all sources: trade, private investment and domestic resources, as well as Government aid from other nations. They also agreed that development must begin at home with the sound economic and political governance at all levels necessary to attract development capital and to use it well. The

Johannesburg plan is an important part of the effort to develop and implement a blueprint for sustainable development, and the United States was proud to join the consensus in Johannesburg not too long ago.

But plans are not enough. Only effective actions can put people to work, provide clean water to thirsty children, or prevent the transmission of a deadly virus from mother to child. That is our challenge.

The United States is stepping up to that challenge. Energetic American efforts were instrumental in the successful launch of the Doha Development Round of world trade talks, the first ones ever focused on development.

Now that Congress has granted President Bush trade promotion authority, the United States is poised to lead toward greater trade-based prosperity.

At the Monterrey Conference, President Bush unveiled his Millennium Challenge Account initiative to seek funding to increase our direct assistance to nations in need over the next three years to a new level, 50 per cent higher than our current level of aid support. The $5 billion in new money will go every year to developing nations that are governed wisely and fairly, that are strongly committed to investing in health and education and which follow economic policies that encourage entrepreneurs and spur growth. We were active at the World Food Summit in Rome. We pledged an additional $90 million for programmes to help small farmers harness science and technology and the power of free markets, to improve crop yields and to bolster incomes.

At Johannesburg, we introduced effective partnerships to expand access to clean water and affordable energy, reduce pollution, provide jobs and improve food supplies, for millions of people. And, with the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), we are rewarding good development policy with expanded access to United States markets.

Africa is also stepping up to the development challenge, especially with the New Partnership for Africa's Development that we are discussing this morning, NEPAD. With NEPAD, Africa's leaders have accepted primary responsibility for Africa's development. They have committed themselves to the changes their countries need to attract and use development capital from all sources. They have pledged to open their Governments, strengthen their economies, and educate their people.

We welcome this new direction in Africa's development efforts. But countries that fail to live up to NEPAD's commitments will suffer. Zimbabwe's economic decline is a warning about the dangers of ignoring the linkage between good policies and human development.

Last summer, Presidents Mbeki, Obasanjo, Bouteflika and Wade continued the dialogue on African development at the Group of Eight (G-8) Summit in Canada. President Bush and the other G-8 leaders committed their Governments to stronger partnerships with countries whose performance reflects the commitments that are being made by the nations participating in NEPAD. The real test is yet to come, however. The people of Africa, and indeed the people of the world, will ultimately judge this initiative on whether its bold rhetoric and commitments are reflected in concrete action for change and greater well-being.

The evidence shows that countries that adhere to the types of reforms for which NEPAD stands face a better future. We see this in the impact of AGOA. Nations such as South Africa, Lesotho and Madagascar, which are taking advantage of the AGOA bargain, are seeing trade, foreign investment and economic growth all increase as a result of their commitment.

I can assure you all, my friends and colleagues, that the United States is committed to helping the people of Africa build a peaceful, prosperous and democratic future. NEPAD's principles of good governance, open markets and human rights show the way.

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Dominique Galouzeau de Villepin, Minister for Foreign Affairs of France.

Mr. Galouzeau de Villepin (France) (*spoke in French*): At the present time, and we are all delighted at this, the main crises on the African continent are moving towards stabilization. Prospects for peace are appearing on the horizon in Angola, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan and even in the Great Lakes. This results, in the main, from the efforts of Africans themselves, but also from the very considerable commitment made by the international community. Today, the bulk of resources

devoted to peacekeeping by the United Nations are being deployed in Africa.

At a time when we are thus making progress in the resolution of conflicts, it is essential to do everything we can also to foster the economic development of the African continent, because there can be no lasting peace without development, nor can there be any possible development without established peace.

In this respect, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) constitutes a very promising initiative, through which Africans are evincing the determination to take their destinies in hand. We must all respond in a way that it is up to their expectations. But, also, Africans must make efforts themselves, and this is the time for the developed countries to reassert their solidarity with regard to Africa's fate.

This meeting, held within the framework of the General Assembly, is an opportunity to do some stocktaking at the present time and to set some new targets. As we look at the unique philosophy of NEPAD, namely partnership and ownership by Africans themselves, then we can make a number of positive findings. First of all, NEPAD is a common project for the whole of Africa, including North Africa. Next, institutions are being established through an Implementation Committee and a Steering Committee. Finally, many African heads of State are personally involving themselves in this approach. In particular, I would like to pay tribute to Presidents Wade, Obasanjo, Mbeki, Mubarak and Bouteflika.

This being so, we have every reason to be optimistic. Optimistic in the first place, with regard to the excellence of African efforts in, because Africa, by mobilizing itself, makes NEPAD an essential element in the national, regional and international timetable. The continent is establishing realistic and relevant priorities: infrastructures, education, water, the fight against poverty and good governance. Around these joint objectives, Africa is setting up a process for the evaluation of its efforts, the peer review mechanism. The Africans are, therefore, setting the target to be achieved, as well as the methods to be followed.

We are also able to feel optimistic about the approach taken by of the developed countries. A general recognition of the urgency of the fight against poverty is now coming to light. Taking careful note of the favourable developments in Africa, the developed countries are prepared to establish new relationships with that continent, working within a partnership approach. The commitments made in Monterrey may lead to an increase in official development assistance, joining a broader mobilization of various agents, both public and private.

What are the prospects today? Well, the year that has passed has been marked by a series of meetings that converge towards the same focus. We need to bring about the practical implementation of NEPAD objectives. We are now awaiting from our African friends the establishment of precise priority objectives and an explication of the specific mechanisms that they wish to set up, as well as an explanation of the exact role of the African Union.

Development constitutes an immense challenge. The achievement of development requires that this movement take deep root in Africa. Diplomatic dialogue is necessary, but it is not sufficient. Africans must, therefore, mobilize all the dynamic forces in their societies in order to give specific form to their will.

The Kananaskis Summit of the Group of Eight industrialized countries (G-8) launched a process. The G-8 Plan of Action for Africa initiates a response to NEPAD, defines the major themes and outlines ways to address them. The developed countries must now abide by the Plan. The urgency today consists in fulfilling our commitments to forging a structured partnership between the North and South. France will be Chair of the G-8 in 2003 and intends to use that year to make Africa a priority and continue the work begun at Kananaskis, with the goal of building a partnership that is generous, clear and determined, as the President of the French Republic has expressed the wish to do. France will show its strength and determination at the G-8 Summit to be held in June 2003 at Evian-les-Bains.

We intend to address two priorities. First, we intend to increase our official development assistance by 50 per cent over five years, to implement the Monterrey commitments. This effort will mainly be devoted to Africa.

Secondly, we wish to mobilize the private sector. That is the entire meaning of the Franco-British initiative announced by the President of the French Republic and the British Prime Minister at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg. We will have a number of opportunities

to strengthen and clarify this dialogue with Africa: at the Franco-African Conference, the Europe-Africa Summit and at the next G-8 Summit, making NEPAD a central theme. We need to arrive at a common reading of this partnership and its relationship with the G-8. Side by side with that, the concept of mutual responsibility should provide a counterpoint to the African peer review mechanism.

We are, I hope, at the dawn of a new era for Africa. Through NEPAD, we have designed the necessary tool. Now we must build it and use it. That is Africa's challenge as well as ours.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Felipe Pérez Roque, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

Mr. Pérez Roque (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba fully supports the emergence of a new alliance for the development of Africa, conceived and managed by the African countries themselves. We have heard the pronouncements of African leaders representing peoples with which we have fraternal ties, and which yesterday were the peoples of exploited colonies whose most elementary human rights were violated over centuries. We are reminded that only a few years ago, there was no independent Namibia. There was no security for the territorial integrity of Angola. And we were saddened to see South Africa under the loathsome apartheid regime. It moves me to recall memory of the 350,000 Cubans who voluntarily went to Africa to fight against colonialism and apartheid, and especially the nearly 2,000 who died fighting for those ideals. We still feel, with pride, the most prized of treasures: the warmth and admiration offered to us by the African peoples.

We have the moral authority to speak at this gathering. We do not see Africa as a promised land for investments and easy profits, but rather as the land of our brethren to whom we owe much of our own history and culture. Almost 30,000 young Africans have been educated in Cuba. Over 3,000 are now studying under scholarships and fellowships in our country, more than 1,000 of whom are embarking on medical careers. Almost 1,000 Cuban doctors are today working free of charge in rural areas in 12 African countries. We know what we are talking about, and our African brothers in this Hall know the same.

In order for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to have a future, we need the following. First, Africa must have all its external debt forgiven. Today Africa is a net exporter of capital. If all African peoples stopped eating, clothing themselves, being educated and having medical care for an entire year, their entire gross national product (GNP) still would not be enough to pay their external debt.

Secondly, Africa needs special and diverse treatment, access to markets and fair prices for its exports. Why is it that, despite its abundant and valuable natural resources, Africa's share of world trade is only 2 per cent? Will the developed countries accept fair treatment for Africa at the next round of negotiations of the World Trade Organization (WTO), or will they continue short-sightedly to protect the narrow interests of their transnational companies?

Thirdly, Africa needs access to technology and to the training of its human resources. Will the developed countries stop robbing Africa of its talent, particularly now, at the time when they are robbing even their athletes? Half of Africans do not have electricity, and there are more telephones in Manhattan alone than in all of sub-Saharan Africa. What kind of development are we talking about? Does it mean anything for millions of Africans to talk about things like electronic commerce and cyberspace?

Fourthly, Africa needs additional financial resources without interference and with no conditionalities. Let us not forget that Africa is spending, today, four times more on servicing a constantly growing external debt than on health and education combined. As they criticize the problems of Africa, do the G-8 leaders really think about the fact that, in large measure, these problems stem from centuries of colonialism and exploitation? Why do they not set an example and give 0.7 per cent of GNP in official development assistance, to raise their own contribution from 53 billion to 170 billion, if they know that only 64 billion dollars per annum would be sufficient for the entire financial requirements of NEPAD?

Fifthly, in order for NEPAD to make sense and have a future, Africa needs help in fighting HIV/AIDS. Will the more than 25 million Africans infected with the AIDS virus be able one day to get appropriate treatment? What future awaits the more than 13 million Africans who have been orphaned as a result of HIV/AIDS?

Let me repeat Cuba's offer to send 4,000 Cuban doctors and medical personnel to Africa to create the infrastructure that will make it possible to care for the population, with the medications, prescriptions and follow-up they need. They would help also with the training of human resources. Deeds, not words, are what Africa needs: firm commitments, not rhetoric; and humble acceptance of the historical debt owed to Africa by those who gained and still gain from the exploitation of Africa. There are dozens of countries in this Hall that should make such a commitment. Will they decide to give up some of their privileges to contribute financial resources to NEPAD? That is the question.

If these actions that I am calling for are not taken, all the rest will be mere good intentions, vague promises and new frustrations.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Anatoliy Zlenko, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

Mr. Zlenko (Ukraine): I am pleased to address this high level meeting of the General Assembly on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) on behalf of a country which has a long history of friendship and partnership with Africa. That history dates back to the time of our concerted action to eradicate colonialism and apartheid, and it continues with our joint efforts aimed at resolving conflicts and promoting development in Africa.

Ukraine welcomes the establishment of the African Union as a historic step taken by the peoples of Africa, clearly recognizing that their strength lies in their unity. We hope that the African Union will become a driving force in promoting peace and stability, democracy and good governance, the rule of law and sustainable development for the countries of the continent.

In that context, we welcome the high-level intergovernmental meeting of African Union member States on the prevention and combating of terrorism, just held at Algiers from 11 to 14 September. The Ukraine commends and supports the initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development as a logical continuation and reflection of the commitment of African countries to achieve stability and economic growth all over their continent.

We believe that the underlying principles of NEPAD — ownership, partnership and responsibility — provide a strong foundation to reach that noble goal. All of us present in this Hall realize that the success of NEPAD can be ensured only if the initiative is put into action on the basis of a strong African consensus and sound international support.

Today, Africa bears the heaviest burden in the challenges of the contemporary world, the worst of which are armed conflicts, poverty and HIV/AIDS. These challenges represent major impediments on the path to achieving the goals which were set out by the world leaders at the Millennium Summit, at Monterrey and at Johannesburg. It is our shared responsibility to help African peoples in their pursuit of lasting peace and sustainable development.

We highly appreciate and support the efforts of Secretary-General Kofi Annan in mobilizing international assistance and promoting cooperation to benefit the peoples of Africa. We believe that the United Nations has an important role to play in the New Partnership and that it should be provided with the necessary means and tools to carry out its activities for Africa in the most effective way. My country has always been committed to the objectives of peace and development in Africa. That commitment has been confirmed by the substantial participation of Ukraine in United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa, as well as by continuing efforts to expand and foster bilateral trade and economic relations with African countries.

Ukraine's interest in developing strong and mutually beneficial partnerships with the African countries was recently reaffirmed by the President of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, during his meetings with African leaders in Johannesburg. Ukraine stands ready to make a constructive contribution to the process of NEPAD implementation. In particular, we are ready to participate in bilateral and multilateral cooperation programmes for specific sectorial NEPAD priorities, which could include the spheres of education, agriculture and transportation.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Ukraine's commitment to support African development efforts in a spirit of true partnership and mutually beneficial cooperation. We are convinced that with the concerted efforts of the international community, NEPAD will become a success story for Africa.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Blas Ople, Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Philippines.

Mr. Ople (Philippines): The global victory over apartheid was won through the leadership, determination and sacrifice of the African people. Today, there is once again a need to call on that same resolve to win the battle for development. The road map to accomplish this is the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and one major force for its realization is the newly organized African Union. We thus wish the African Union the best in its quest for sustainable growth and development. We know it is capable of reaching for no less than greatness.

Major developments in the world put the needs of developing countries at the forefront. In Monterrey, we established a new consensus model of development that takes into account all parts of the development equation, including the needs and priorities of developing countries. In Johannesburg, we concluded our 10-year review of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which, according to Secretary-General Kofi Annan, opened a new chapter of responsibility, partnership and implementation.

While global developments favouring growth are important, regional cooperation will be indispensable. We learned this in the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), and our modest success could serve as a model to help Africa overcome the enormous challenges that it faces, particularly in connection with factors that hinder effective regional cooperation and integration. The African Foreign Ministers I have met in New York agree that Africa and ASEAN should forge stronger ties. Indeed we should, for there is much that we can learn from each other. We will do our part, but developed partners must also extend all possible assistance to African countries in order to strengthen key institutions, such as the civil service, the judiciary, the business sector and civil society.

South-South cooperation can also play a pivotal role and should therefore be vigorously promoted and pursued. In this area, the Philippines can share its experiences, including its positive and progressive record of Government partnership with all stakeholders, including the business sector and civil society. The Philippines has held very preliminary discussions with donor countries on providing joint technical assistance to Africa, especially in capacity building. I am confident that our talks will bear fruit.

Globalization must not marginalize millions in Africa. It is imperative that the flow of aid to the continent be stable and predictable. We therefore, once again, urge all developed partners to meet the aid target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP), and we commend those that have already done so. Greater access of African products to global markets is also needed. The international community must remain serious about debt relief. We thus support the enhanced Highly Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative.

Development is a dividend of peace. We will also support every effort to bring peace and stability to Africa. From efforts to stem the flow of illicit small arms to efforts to resolve existing conflicts and prevent new ones, the Philippines will be one with the rest of the international community.

We were with Africans when they struck down the monster that was apartheid. We will be with them as they rise up and claim the fruits of growth, progress and development that they so rightly deserve.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Benaissa, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Morocco.

Mr. Benaissa (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I would like first, Mr. President, to thank you for organizing this meeting on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which once again places Africa at the centre of the attention of the General Assembly and of the whole of the international community. As a member of the African family, Morocco cannot fail to welcome the holding of this debate, only a few days before the final review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

In order to take charge of its own affairs, the African continent took the initiative by devising NEPAD, a programme for the social, economic and political development of the continent, and also a framework for cooperation and partnership with Africa's friends. NEPAD is thus a starting point for integrated development. Its implementation will depend on the political will of each African country to

adapt it to its own policies while preparing a propitious environment for sustainable development.

It goes without saying that the United Nations, through its principal organs — the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council — will be called upon to play a central role in the success of NEPAD. It would therefore appear of paramount importance that we determine the ways and means for United Nations engagement in this partnership.

If the tools for coordination and programming of the United Nations system are to be put at the service of dialogue and cooperation with the African countries, the major challenge consists of adopting those tools and mechanisms to NEPAD and to the national priorities of the countries concerned. Of course, international and regional funding institutions which, for their part, possess tools for cooperation and assistance in Africa, should coordinate their efforts with the United Nations for the benefit of Africa.

If the funding of NEPAD is the greatest challenge for the African countries to meet, the main task for the United Nations is pleading the cause of Africa before the financial backers, donors, businesses and non-governmental organizations in order to facilitate new models of cooperation based on partnerships and shared responsibilities.

In this regard, we welcome the support and commitment to NEPAD demonstrated by the Group of Eight (G-8), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. We express the hope that this support will result in concrete measures and new forms of cooperation and partnership.

We would also like to underline that the success of NEPAD necessarily and especially involves strengthening international economic cooperation, coherence among economic, trade and financial policies and the improvement of access for African exports to the markets of the wealthy countries, thus making it possible to free up sufficient resources to finance economic and social development initiatives.

Also, particular attention should be given to the problems of the heavily-indebted countries in order to rethink the debt problem, through cancellation or rescheduling. Debt servicing, in fact, continues to absorb enormous financial resources of the African countries.

As for Morocco, His Majesty King Mohammed VI announced at the Cairo Euro-African Summit a decision to cancel the external debt of the least developed African countries and to open Morocco's markets to the exports of those countries. Those measures have made it possible to reinforce economic and trade relations between Morocco and the other African countries and will contribute to the achievement of the objectives of NEPAD.

As well, the private sector is increasingly being oriented towards African markets. Moroccan investment is very present in many countries of the region, especially through joint ventures, which have proved a promising instrument for promoting the integration of African economies.

The Kingdom of Morocco's commitment to development and stability in Africa is reflected in its constant and multifaceted contribution to the allaying of tensions and to the peaceful settlement of conflicts in Africa. My country will remain faithful to that commitment so that our continent may cease to be marginalized and may fully assume its role on the international scene.

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Morshed Khan, Foreign Minister of Bangladesh.

Mr. Khan (Bangladesh): I am happy to be here at this high-level meeting deliberating on Africa. For I have seen for myself the challenges that many fellow nations in that continent face today, whether it be ending armed conflicts, rebuilding societies ravaged by war or struggling for social and economic progress in the face of internal or external adversity.

The United Nations, the international community and African nations themselves have long been aware of Africa's problems and needs. The report of the Club of Rome in the 1970s and the report of the South Commission that President Mwalimu Nyerere headed in 1990 both highlighted Africa's urgent needs. The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) was precisely an attempt to address Africa's multifaceted challenges.

We share the Secretary-General's assessment that there are a number of important lessons to be learnt from UN-NADAF's journey: that development cooperation with Africa requires a new orientation; that the international community should honour its

commitments; that strengthened advocacy remains essential for Africa's development; and that peace and security are essential preconditions for Africa's sustainable development.

The central lesson is to own the development strategies. The launching of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in July 2001 and its adoption by the African Union last month affirmed that. By all measures, African leaders deserve to be commended for effectively articulating their problems and envisioning ways of addressing them.

Bangladesh has been involved in the United Nations efforts in Africa in the areas of both peace and development. In the case of Sierra Leone, allow me to mention that Bangladesh went in where others were leaving when the United Nations Mission was in jeopardy.

I myself was in Sierra Leone just this summer. And I must tell you how gratifying it was to see a fellow developing nation emerging from one of the bloodiest of civil wars. I saw the ravages of the civil war in Lungi, Lunsar, Magburaka and Freetown. I also saw the determination of the people to rebuild their own country. The visit reaffirmed my conviction of our responsibility to act, of our individual and collective capacity to address such conflicts and of the strength of this Organization.

There has hardly been a United Nations peacekeeping mission in Africa in the last two decades in which Bangladesh did not participate. We sent our peacekeepers to even the most dangerous theatres. We did this in keeping with our Charter commitment and in the spirit of solidarity with our African brethren.

African conflicts have dominated the Security Council agenda in the past years. As a member of the Council, Bangladesh pursued a policy of activism, pleaded greater United Nations engagement and tried to match her political commitment with her presence in the field. Conflict prevention constitutes a major element in the entire African agenda. Bangladesh played a lead role in ensuring follow-up to the Secretary-General's seminal report on the prevention of armed conflict. Bangladesh continues to play an active role on the matter in the General Assembly.

In development and in peace, Bangladesh, as a member of the Group of 77, of the Non-Aligned Movement and of the least developed countries, walks with fellow African nations when approaching issues. We recognize that while conflicts impede development, many of Africa's conflicts are rooted in endemic poverty, underdevelopment and a weak institutional basis for development.

Recognizing this inevitably takes us to what was underscored at the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held last year. The Brussels Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries outline a menu of actions to be implemented by the international community to address the socio-economic challenges facing the 49 most impoverished countries, 34 of which are in Africa. Fulfilment of the commitments of the Programme of Action will go a long way in addressing Africa's problems.

As Africa marches ahead to address its own challenges, we have a moral responsibility to extend our hands in cooperation to Africa. The trend of a declining flow of resources into Africa must be reversed. An effective solution to Africa's extremely daunting debt problem cannot wait any longer. Above all, Africa's economies need to be rebuilt, and access for Africa's exports to markets outside Africa should be ensured. These are but a few of the things expected of us. I am certain that the international community will come forward in Africa's aid.

Within the framework of South-South cooperation, countries like Bangladesh can and will strive to meaningfully contribute to Africa's rebuilding. Over the years, Bangladesh has experimented with a number of innovative approaches to development, such as microcredit to address extreme poverty and empower our women, and creating social safety nets for the needy. Involving non-governmental organizations and all civil society actors, we have been able to strengthen our institutions and deliver broad-based social sector programmes. We remain ready to share our experience in all these areas with our African brothers and sisters.

NEPAD is based on a new vision for Africa. Addressing extreme poverty is obviously a strategic choice at the heart of NEPAD. It also is based on the realization that progress in developing Africa cannot be achieved without the social and economic emancipation of a majority of its long-neglected nations. Let us resolve to address precisely that challenge.

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Allan Wagner Tizón, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Peru.

Mr. Wagner Tizón (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Peru is pleased to participate in this important gathering, which seeks to mobilize the support of the international community for the peace, progress and sustainable development of the African continent. Our presence here reflects not only that we share the status of developing countries, but also that we are heirs to that continent's cultural and human wealth. For more than four centuries, Africa's contribution to all areas has been a central element of our national identity.

Peru welcomes the establishment of the African Union and of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as specific, effective and bold steps towards resolving, in a collective, serious and responsible way, the problems afflicting African countries on the basis of their own thinking and a common commitment.

My country took an active part in the international support for the struggle against apartheid and for Namibia's independence, and it has followed closely the major developments that have been occurring on the African continent. We have cooperated in every possible way with United Nations efforts to promote peace and development on that continent. We participate in the Working Group on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. At the most recent session of the Economic and Social Council, we supported the creation of an ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict situations.

In the past few months, we have welcomed the positive results achieved by various peace-building processes on the continent as a result of real political will and the desire of the Governments and the people of Africa to build their future on the basis of dialogue and cooperation. My country takes pride in having taken part and in continuing to take part in those efforts through its participation in peacekeeping operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Eritrea and Ethiopia.

My country would like to emphasize the commitment undertaken by African leaders in NEPAD with regard to strengthening democracy and promoting human rights, including the fostering of transparency and accountability among those in Government. Peru fully upholds the paramount importance of democracy, which we consider to be a right of peoples that is directly linked to sustainable development.

These premises are enshrined in the Inter-American Democratic Charter, adopted within the framework of the Organization of American States. The President of Peru, Mr. Alejandro Toledo, was unable to be present at this session, as he would have wished, because he was in Washington to commemorate the anniversary of the adoption of that document, so central to inter-American relations. My country stands ready to cooperate with Africa's States and regional organizations to share this important experience, both in its management and in the positive application of its initial results.

Peru also agrees with NEPAD's vision, which values the necessity of strengthening and revitalizing social sectors such as education and health — especially as it applies to HIV/AIDS — as well as the recognition of a leading role for the private sector. Aware of the need to invest for the future, my country has been promoting, at the Latin American level, a proposal designed to effectively and gradually limit defence spending, which would permit the reallocation of those resources towards social spending and public welfare. It is obvious that these efforts require in turn a concrete commitment on the part of developed countries that will allow the channelling of such initiatives towards real results.

Finally, I should like to stress that any strategy for sustainable development, no matter how well conceived, will not attain the desired results and objectives if there is no effective increase in official development assistance or real opening of the markets of developed countries. These principles, which my country fully supports, were reaffirmed and strengthened at the recent international summits at Monterrey and Johannesburg. We hope that they will become reality for the benefit of all developing countries, especially the least developed countries of Africa.

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Yashwant Sinha, the Minister for External Affairs of India.

Mr. Sinha (India): I am happy to participate and to represent India in this high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Crafting partnerships

among African countries themselves and between Africa and the rest of the international community is at the core of NEPAD.

By virtue of the abundance of its natural resources and the capacity of its peoples to be agents of change, Africa holds the key to its own development. The process of African development, however, like any other process, requires venture capital. NEPAD provides the prospectus for a new listing, and we conclude, having studied it carefully, that the venture promises to be mutually beneficial. We expect that Africa will benefit and that the return on investment will be manifold. In our view, the market has every reason to be bullish on NEPAD.

In NEPAD, Africa has accorded the highest priority to democracy. Like India, it sees democracy as a moral imperative. Democracy provides the basis for durable peace and stability. Conflict and instability are anathema to economic development. Democracy is, therefore, a necessary condition for progress and prosperity. Democracy, however, does not provide an instant recipe for economic salvation. Economic development requires, in addition, sound economic policies. And sound policies — in fact, the only workable policies, economic or political — are those that are chosen by the people themselves.

The independent evaluation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s found that the liberalization, the privatization and the market-based reforms pursued by many African countries in the 1990s did help to improve their macroeconomic situation. The adjustment programmes, however, failed to restore economic growth and had adverse effects on social conditions. Overriding reliance on liberalization, privatization and market-based reforms has, in many cases, proved counterproductive to accelerating development and alleviating poverty.

In the past, Africa has had policies imposed from outside. National ownership is not a mere principle to be paid lip service. The restriction of democratic space is not only morally unacceptable; it is also, we find, economically and socially counterproductive and often proves to be disastrous.

This, in our view, is a principal lesson which the international community needs to learn from the experiences of the past.

We are gratified at the significant increase in the volume, quality and scope of South-South cooperation between Africa and the rest of the developing world. India has been particularly active in investment and in various forms of technical cooperation arrangements with African countries. An important reason for this success is perhaps the relevance and appropriateness of the Indian development experience to Africa.

India's relationship with Africa is built on strong historical and political foundations. It has been our objective, for the last four decades, also to impart substantive economic content to this relationship. Over the past decades, we have provided more than $2 billion in technical assistance to the countries of the South. More than 1,400 representatives of developing countries, the majority from Africa, are provided training every year under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme. Also, at any time, we are host to around 10,000 African students in our country. We are happy, through this programme, to be able to contribute to capacity-building in Africa.

Trade between India and sub-Saharan Africa has increased by almost 300 per cent over the last nine years. We are determined to maintain and improve this rate of growth. India's Ministry of Commerce and Industry has therefore launched a "Focus Africa" programme this year. We attach particular importance to the promotion of private-sector linkages and have initiated training programmes for private-sector institutions.

In July this year, a conference on India and NEPAD was held in New Delhi that brought together representatives of Indian industry and financial institutions and their partners in Africa. The conference addressed, among other issues, the question of improving utilization of the lines of credit extended by India to many countries in Africa. We have set for ourselves a target of $200 million in credit, to be made available in the next year.

India is ready for NEPAD.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Luvsangiin Erdenechuluun, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mongolia.

Mr. Erdenechuluun (Mongolia): It gives me great pleasure to address this high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly which is considering the timely issue of rendering all-round support to an extremely important new initiative of the African leaders, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

As many may recall, the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s was adopted by the General Assembly in 1991. The New Agenda set a desirable target of an average real growth rate of at least 6 per cent per annum of the gross national product for Africa. However, a growth rate of about 3 per cent was recorded throughout the decade, far below the growth rate necessary to attain the poverty-reduction targets set by the international community.

Declining official development assistance to Africa and indebtedness were cited among the main reasons. Official development assistance to Africa, which was $28.62 billion in 1990, fell to $16.38 billion in 2000. The failure to achieve the target was in some cases attributed to over-reliance on certain measures and market-based reforms, which in many instances proved to be counterproductive and did not bring the desired results.

At the same time, in the 1990s African countries made significant strides in the process of democratization. Popular elections were held in many countries. Democratic systems of government, the rule of law, freedom of speech and human rights have become the quest of a young generation of African leaders.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) at that time in its turn took the lead in introducing democratic changes in its member countries. It also took active steps to strengthen its conflict resolution and prevention capabilities.

Mr. Aguilar Zinser (Mexico), Vice-President, took the Chair.

One of the most important lessons learned from the past decade has been the inseparable link between peace and security as well as economic development and social progress. It is now widely recognized that securing peace and tranquillity for the sake of economic progress is the highest priority and the primary responsibility of all the African countries, individually and collectively.

There are many conflicts in Africa that remain unresolved, while others now dormant could flare up at any moment. Africa, which has suffered too long from armed conflicts, is at present, with the support of the international community, seriously engaged in resolving numerous conflicts in many parts of the continent, including the Great Lakes region. My delegation wishes every success to Africa in accomplishing this difficult, impending task.

At this new stage of international development cooperation in support of Africa, the leaders of Africa, taking stock of the lessons of the past, undertook a major revision of the philosophy of the development of the continent. Mongolia therefore expresses its firm support for the creation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

NEPAD represents a comprehensive blueprint of, and a growth vision for, Africa's future economic and social development. It is an Africa-led, owned and managed initiative, as described in the draft United Nations Declaration on the New Partnership for Africa's Development, contained in document A/57/L.2/Rev.1, of which Mongolia is a sponsor.

NEPAD not only contains a broad framework of principles that will serve as guidelines for country-level planning and execution. It provides the general framework of principles for sound economic policies and management, and for transparent, accountable and democratic governance. It also provides a forum for dialogue between African political leadership and the Group of Eight on issues related to African development, including aid adequacy, trade access and debt relief.

My delegation shares the view of the Panel of Eminent Personalities that the Secretary-General, the President of the World Bank, the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund and the Secretary-General of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) may be included to broaden this dialogue.

NEPAD was designed by Africans for Africans, based on the lessons of the past decade. The African countries committed themselves to taking effective measures for its implementation. The initiative has

already won widespread endorsement by the international community.

My delegation is confident that this important initiative will receive the generous support of the international donor community and will achieve the targets set for the African renaissance. I therefore appeal to all representatives to lend their valuable support to the draft Declaration contained in document A/57/L.2/Rev.1.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by Mr. Anil Kumarsingh Gayan, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation of Mauritius.

Mr. Gayan (Mauritius): I wish first of all to thank the General Assembly for holding this High-Level Plenary Meeting on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). This provides Africa and the international community with an opportunity to give substance to the partnership which we all expect will put Africa on the path of recovery.

NEPAD, which is an economic programme of the African Union, is an inclusive one, covering the whole membership from the continent to the island States of the Union.

NEPAD is the vision of African leaders to address the political, economic and social as well as the ecological challenges which the continent is facing. NEPAD embodies not only the hopes and ideals of Africans and their leaders but also their determination to have a new paradigm for Africa.

The Declaration on Political, Economic and Corporate Governance and the African Peer Review Mechanism show that we have decided that business in Africa will no longer be business as usual. They are a solemn pledge on our part that we shall not be found wanting in the observance of these norms. We do, however, recognize that urgency is of the essence and that we cannot afford to lose any time. The challenges we confront are enormous, but we have agreed to be assessed and to be judged by the fate of NEPAD. The poverty that confronts us and every other human being in the world cannot continue. The time to act is now. Tomorrow might be too late.

Since there have been many plans for Africa's development in the past, NEPAD might be subject to a degree of cynicism and déjà vu. We are, however, of the view that NEPAD is not just another plan; it is an African plan designed by Africans in order to meet achievable targets over set time frames. We are determined to prove the cynics wrong and to accompany NEPAD in meeting the goals and targets agreed at the Millennium Summit.

As a member of the Implementation Committee, Mauritius believes that the success of NEPAD depends on the involvement of the totality of the international community. Peace and security in the world can be realized only when children in Africa can realistically look to a brighter future. We urge the international community to welcome NEPAD and to support it wholeheartedly in order to rescue Africa.

We are encouraged by some recent developments. The Monterrey Consensus in respect of additional resources in official development assistance, the endorsement of NEPAD and the adoption of an Action Plan for Africa at the G-8 Summit in Kananaskis, and the pronouncements at the World Summit on Sustainable Development on eradicating poverty are very positive signals.

We note that the final review and appraisal of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) will take place during the current session of the General Assembly. This should not mark the end of United Nations support for Africa. The United Nations system has the moral and political authority to accelerate the process of building partnerships for Africa's development. A system-wide United Nations coordinating framework will have to be developed to improve the effectiveness of the United Nations support for NEPAD. This could be largely facilitated through a United Nations focal point, both in New York and at the Economic Commission for Africa, in Addis Ababa.

Governance is critical to the success of NEPAD. Good political governance and respect for the rule of law and for human rights go hand in hand with good corporate governance. Since the role of the private sector will be very important for NEPAD's implementation, we are confident that the private sector will look at the potential of, and in, Africa in terms of an association spanning decades rather than months or years.

Africa is ready for business, and the architecture of NEPAD is ideal to attract foreign direct investment. While we are determined to make a success of NEPAD, we urge donor countries to be patient and to understand

that reversing the governance and management pattern of the past will take some time. Although we shall not flinch from the objective, we are aware that there may be occasional accidents. But this should not be held up as an excuse to inflict collective punishment upon Africa.

We have agreed to be judged by our declarations and undertakings. We shall assume full responsibility for any shortcoming or failure, since we are painfully aware that the time to bring a glimmer of hope to millions of Africans was yesterday. With the dawn of a day when there is a radiant smile on the face of every African baby, boy or girl, then we will be able to say that the commitment we are showing today has started to be operationalized. We cannot fail, because we cannot afford to fail.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by Her Excellency Mrs. Carolina Barco Isakson, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia.

Mrs. Barco Isakson (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Colombia welcomes the holding of this plenary meeting of the General Assembly as part of the process of assessing and guiding the efforts of the United Nations with regard to Africa's development.

Ensuring that Africa enjoys the benefits of peace, independence and development is a historic commitment of the Organization. Let us recall here the achievements of decolonization; South Africa's liberation from the yoke of apartheid; the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s; and peacekeeping missions throughout the continent. United Nations efforts in those fields constitute a legacy belonging to all States Members of the Organization, a legacy in which we all see ourselves reflected. In participating in this debate, my country therefore reaffirms its conviction that the United Nations must respond to the special needs of Africa and work towards its successful integration into the mainstream of globalization, as agreed by our heads of State in the Millennium Declaration.

We welcome the opportunity to hear the clear voice of Africa in this Hall, which is presenting to the rest of the world its aspirations to economic and social development, to democracy with transparency in public administration and to peace and security throughout the continent. These are the ideas enshrined in the Constitutive Act of the African Union and in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The elements of the NEPAD strategy will become binding points of reference for Colombia, as they should become for the United Nations in its efforts to bridge the gap between the countries of the North and of the South, and between Africa and the rest of the world.

In NEPAD my country sees the vision and efforts of African countries themselves to guide their development. We believe that is the most appropriate way to eliminate the disadvantageous effects of external assistance. For better or worse, the African renaissance does not depend only on the mere wish of their rulers and social leaders to act. There is much that the international community can contribute in terms of human, technical and financial resources. We should single out in particular the political decision to establish a mechanism for NEPAD's members themselves to evaluate their compliance with the programme's goals — the Peer Review Mechanism — as an original, well-intentioned and courageous measure. The United Nations and other international organizations must respond to the peoples of Africa with an approach based on this new reality.

We think it appropriate that the General Assembly has decided to set aside time during its fifty-seventh session for special meetings on a final review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) and, concurrently, to assess the implementation of the recommendations contained in the 1998 report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of development in Africa (A/52/871).

Allow me to mention that during the 20 months that Colombia has been a non-permanent member of the Security Council, we have contributed to keeping the United Nations engaged in the settlement of various conflicts affecting the continent today. Through our contacts with African leaders and our participation in three Security Council missions to Africa, we have a better understanding of the dilemmas of peace and development faced by Africa's peoples. It is clear to us that without peace there can be no development, no integration into the rest of the world and no future for a society.

On this solemn occasion, Colombia wishes to reiterate its determination to work with other countries at the United Nations to focus the attention of the

Organization and the international community on the aspirations set down by the African peoples in the Constitutive Act of the African Union and in their New Partnership for Africa's Development.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Mikhail Khvostov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus.

Mr. Khvostov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): In today's interdependent world, no member of the international community can remain indifferent to the problems faced by entire continents. The Republic of Belarus fully supports United Nations efforts to assist Africa as it tries to break free from the grip of the poverty, conflict and backwardness inherited from the era of colonialism and global political confrontation.

Belarus welcomes the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), an initiative developed by African States themselves. The fact that the international community has responded positively to that initiative and is providing practical assistance for its implementation is grounds for hope that the continent will be transformed into a dynamic region where confrontation between Powers and blocs will give way to close cooperation between all States Members of the United Nations for the benefit of African nations.

Looking back at history, it is clear that recent global ideological confrontation resulted in funds being diverted from development needs. When that confrontation came to an end, a number of young States had to re-evaluate their role and their place in the current system of international relations. Cold-war stereotypes having been done away with, we now have a more active model of relations for comprehensive cooperation with African States. The partnership with Africa is of great importance for Belarus. We are counting on reciprocity from our African partners in our efforts to develop cooperation with Africa.

Over the past few years, Belarus has intensified its cooperation with the countries of the region, having become a full-fledged member of the Non-Aligned Movement. This cooperation is mutually beneficial and is aimed, first and foremost, at resolving the most pressing problems faced by Africa.

My country fully shares the central objectives of NEPAD aimed at achieving the economic restoration and revival of African countries, advancing their governmental systems, strengthening peace and security on the continent, improving the economic infrastructure and creating conditions for sustainable development there.

The emergence of NEPAD, which coincided with the transformation of the Organization of African Unity into the African Union, is testimony to the seriousness of the aspirations of African States to take their place, with dignity, in the modern world — a world that is being greatly influenced by globalization.

Belarus is not yet a donor State. We have, however, established a preferential trade regime. We hope to make a substantial contribution to the revival of Africa. We are ready to cooperate with interested African countries in NEPAD in the areas of health care, education, agriculture and industry, as well as in establishing and modernizing infrastructure. Belarus can offer the services of its experts, who have extensive experience in power engineering, civil and road construction, agriculture and health care. Belarus has substantial experience with regard to irrigation and geological surveys. In this context, Belarus is ready to discuss the modalities of practical involvement in specific projects within the framework of NEPAD, as well as the ways and means of financing Belarusian participation.

Within the NEPAD framework, Belarus is prepared to offer African States a wide range of technologically advanced products. Our industries produce reliable and durable goods that are of high quality and reasonably priced, which could meet the basic needs of the African market.

Belarus is ready to expand cooperation in the field of science and technology, an area in which my country is working on a number of state-of-the-art, innovative research and development projects. We are ready to act under contract with interested organizations and companies from African countries with regard to biotechnology, agricultural technology and equipment, irrigation, and the reliability and durability of machinery, to name just a few. Our scientific centres and institutions could carry out, on a contractual basis, specific research and development in areas of interest to customers.

We are interested in cooperation in the field of health, especially on the particularly important HIV/AIDS-related problems, which have reached

catastrophic proportions in many African nations. We are ready to set up joint ventures on our national territory and in African countries and, working together with them, in third countries.

In the agricultural sector, one area of mutual interest could be the introduction of advanced technologies in cattle breeding, poultry farming, irrigation and agricultural machinery engineering.

Within the United Nations framework, Belarus, as a founding Member of the Organization, will consistently advocate the continuation of unimpeded United Nations efforts aimed at the revival of Africa. Belarus will continue to assist in the promotion and adoption of United Nations programmes and projects to address economic and humanitarian problems of Africa.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Youssouf Ouédraogo, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso.

Mr. Ouédraogo (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): It is a great pleasure for me to take the floor on behalf of Burkina Faso at this high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly devoted to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). It should be remembered that NEPAD was born out of the political will of African leaders to ensure for the new Africa a complete democratic renaissance and to set it on course towards the achievement of sustainable development for the benefit of African peoples. As a result of NEPAD, Africa will be more careful about good governance and human rights; it is determined to take in hand the reins of its own destiny through the definition and establishment of new forms of responsibility and solidarity, within the framework of its economic relations with the rest of the world. The Peer Review Mechanism is the best illustration of this.

The launching of Africa will involve collective, concerted and coordinated action. To that end, the implementation of NEPAD will require, over and above the participation of all the key sectors on the continent, the mobilization of external partners. We therefore welcome the holding of this plenary meeting, just as we should welcome the favourable responses given to NEPAD in major international forums, in particular during the meeting of the Group of Eight and at the Monterrey Conference and the Johannesburg Summit.

This plenary meeting is a manifestation of United Nations support for NEPAD. It is thus an appropriate forum in which to identify new ways of concrete cooperation, not only with the multilateral system of the United Nations, but with our partners from the North and South, where there is still a vast potential for trade, investment and multifaceted cooperation that have not yet been explored but which are necessary for the implementation of NEPAD.

For its part, Burkina Faso, at a very early stage, began to mobilize around NEPAD, by setting up a multidisciplinary and multisectoral unit to study and follow up NEPAD. In addition, under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), it recently assisted in the organization of the first West African regional forum for private sector support for NEPAD, held from 11 to 13 September 2002 in Ouagadougou. That meeting was attended by over 400 participants from all the States members of ECOWAS, as well as from certain countries of Central Africa and other continents.

I take this opportunity to reaffirm Burkina Faso's unswerving commitment to the integrated and harmonious development of the African continent in an environment of peace, social justice and the equitable sharing of the fruits of technological development and world economic progress.

Burkina Faso appeals to the international community, the United Nations in particular, to endorse NEPAD at the global level as the new development strategy for Africa that will henceforth provide Africa's development partners with precise guidelines for honouring their commitments to the continent.

In conclusion, I express the wish that this debate will produce concrete proposals that will give NEPAD a real chance for success.

The meeting rose at 1.35 p.m.